

鉄治職人を目指す

没落予定なので、



著
C.K

かわく

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Volume 4 Chapter 1 :Chapter 59

That day I had a lesson in the afternoon. A man swiftly opened the window of my room from the outside, as I was trying to start with my daily manual labours.

“Prince!?”

As I turned around and tried to catch up with what was going on, I looked clearly puzzled. I didn’t care.

In that moment I also realized that my room was exposed to enemy invasions at any time.

“What are you doing here?”

“Well, well... I have a lot of things to do.”

“What things to do? You are a prince, you don’t have to do anything at all.”

“Sorry... You are just an artisan, you don’t know anything about noble families.”

“Could you leave me alone, please?”

“Once you are done here, would you help me out?”

The prince crouched down and caught sight with me.

The atmosphere was surprisingly serious. For real.

“What is it?”

“In reality, I was looking for Iris right now.”

Oh, wow! I found a stalker. It was 9:31 am, and the prince was trying to get himself arrested.

“What, what are you doing?”

He grabbed my wrist and I shook off his hand.

“No, I am just kidding.”

“Well... Kururi, if you could help me out...”

I was busy, though.

The prince assumed a more regal tone, and a new, selfish aspect of his personality transparred.

Bothersome.

But cooperating with him would have a positive impact on my future. The prize was worth the effort.

“Ha, the unfaithful retinue will let the prince carry out his mission all on his own.”

“Why do you have to be so hostile?”

Ho ho ho, I hit the nail on the head there.

Why was he looking for Iris? Whatever his motives were, I was worried. What could have been going on?

“Iris was in the room next to this one a couple of minutes ago, so I thought we could go and have a look.”

“No, you’re being intrusive. Please stop it.”

“We don’t have time.”

“No, you never have time, do you.”

I followed the prince, but I hoped that story would end shortly.

“Iris is a very anxious person, don’t forget that.”

“Bah! You do whatever you want! It’s not like I care about Iris really!” That sounded quite childish.

“What am I supposed to do exactly?”

“Don’t just stand there, you have to escort me, escort me.”

“Escort? Is that my job?”

Escort of the prince, a duty worthy of a noble. I guess I would do it.

“Recently, Iris has become quite worrysome, don’t you think so?”

“No.”

“Well, I’m not a woman, so I don’t really know what is going on in her mind right now.”

“Iris has definitely been depressed recently, and if a friend of mine is sad, I feel like I have to do something about it... so we must find out what is going on, but we must not reveal ourselves.”

“You said that we were going to do it right now, right? Where are we headed?”

“... If something happens to Iris, I’ll never forgive myself.”

“You’re forcing me to do this, remember that.”

Feeling silent anger, our stalking continued.

Today, Iris only took classes in the morning.

I looked at her sitting in her class, she seemed focused.

There seemed to be nothing wrong there.

“She’s fine now, she’s listening to the lesson.”

“So this has nothing to do with it?”

After the lesson, Iris walked into the library.

Apparently, we were about to find something out very soon.

We were peeping through the bookshelves.

“She seems ok, nothing looks wrong.”

“We’re wasting our time, we won’t find out anything today… wait.” Someone approached her.

As the prince pointed at them, three mysterious beautiful girls were approaching Iris.

They all had brown, long hair.

They looked nice at a first glance, but there was something strange in the way they walked and moved their hands.

Their skin was bright, and looked very neat. They had well-shaped hips, and were not excessively skinny.

I didn’t think anything good was about to happen. No, not at all.

The prince looked very worried.

My face was pale.

It was because they were smiling. Not as friends, there was malice in their faces.

It didn’t look good!

Curse them! The prince was livid at those three girls!

They were definitely about to harass Iris.

I had never realized that before, but Iris was being harassed at school.

They were doing it right there.

The prince was about to jump out! Don’t make anything stupid!

They eventually reached her, but Iris didn't look worried. She was not really bothered by those petty things.

I think she was much stronger than me.

“Oh, sorry.”

One of the girls hurriedly hit Iris' chair. Iris' pen slipped, and drew a long line on her book.

“I'm so sorry, can you forgive me?”

“Well, you didn't do it on purpose, there is no problem.”

Iris answered with a smile. She showed confidence, and didn't look bothered by any of that.

The girls left.

That event left huge scars.

Not on Iris though. She went back to studying as if nothing had really happened. Iris was not the type of person to lose her temper over something like that.

Fortunately things had not escalated, and the incident had died out quickly. I was sure. Iris was not at all concerned.

In regards to the prince... ah, a storm was gathering.

The prince run after the three girls, who were walking away. Freeze!

I hurried up and caught the prince's hand.

“Let it go! Now you know what you wanted to, let it go!”

“Not yet, I'm not done with those girls.”

“It's not necessary!”

He kept on pulling until I could do nothing but let his hand go.

“Okay, then do whatever you want. But that won't help Iris in any way.”

“... how can you say so?”

“No, please, go and make a mess for nothing.”

“Ok, I won't do anything. But why is Iris feeling sad then?

Somehow I looked a bit victorious.

“Iris just doesn't mind it. She would rather have to work harder for her degree

because she is discriminated as a commoner, so that everyone else will be impressed by her. That's how the world works."

"Really?"

"Yes, she must face her own troubles so that the prince will appreciate her more, that's how she feels."

"... Ok, I think I understand. Their execution is suspended for now."

I saw Iris kept on studying.

What was the hardest part of this job?

It required a lt of endurance.

While Iris was eating in the school garden, we took the chance to have lunch ourselves.

We both ate sandwiches.

Mine had plenty of sauce.

The prince had a vegetables sandwich. Raw vegetables, from what I could see.

"Hey, I like that one as well."

"Please, have a morsel."

I let him do as he pleased. It is irresistible to be harassed by power.

Iris ended her lunch and looked happy.

There was nothing wrong at that moment, apparently.

Still, the prince was mumbling.

Well, I had other plans in mind, but was the prince really going to follow Iris for 24 hours straight?

It was about time we talked about something important.

"Prince: why do you think people reward other people?"

"There are several possible reasons. Maybe if you like a certain person, and that person feels happy for the reward, then you feel rewarded as well."

"What will I get for helping you?"

"We'll get this sorted out after Iris' issue will have been dealt with."

Well done, peasant. That seemed to work!

I had never owned anything of value.

That was fine. Even if your house collapses, a merchant will still have precious items for sale, so they won't ever get lost. It was some kind of long-term

investment.

I really wanted something valuable though. This time I was actually expecting something in return.

But in order to achieve that, we still had to fix Iris' issue.

“Iris is going.”

“Okay, let’s move.”

Our suspicious stalking mission was not over yet.

Volume 4 Chapter 2

“I see flowers.”

“She’s looking at flowers.”

Two stalkers looking at a pretty girl who was looking at flowers.

No, the prince was the one real stalker, I was just his guard.

“Oh, I feel uncomfortable.”

“It shows.”

“Is it because of that harassment we witnessed to before?”

“No, I am probably hungry.”

The prince turned his eyes away from Iris and he looked at me.

“Are you serious?”

He was trying to tell me something.

I didn’t know what to do.

“Anyhow, it looks like Iris likes the flowers.”

“There is something regal in you.”

“Is there?”

I blushed.

A lot.

Apparently I was not accustomed to being praised by a handsome man. I was always busy doing something, so I never had anybody around me.

I could double down on it, and hope for a greater reward.

But for the moment, keeping a moderate distance was better. No, I didn’t want to come closer, if possible.

“You are thinking about dirty stuff right now.”

“No, absolutely not.”

He was trying to make his personality manifest. What a situation!

“Iris seems to be moving.”

“Come, let’s go follow her.”

Iris’ next destination was her usual farm.

Her favorite vegetables were growing fast and good.

When she got there she always watered the field a lot.

Any trace of sadness disappeared from her face, and she smiled.

“What is she growing?”

“Don’t you see it?”

“Don’t answer to a question with more questions. Just say what you are asked.”

“It’s vegetables.”

“Vegetables...”

It made no sense for the prince to be confused.

The prince, who should have been knowledgeable, had no idea what vegetables were.

“Aren’t they too big?”

“Maybe it is the prince who has become smaller.”

he prince seemed very interested in that big vegetable.

The nation is a prince’s pride. He ought to strive ad create a rich country. And he should have returned with his feet back on the ground.

“Who is helping her in the fields?”

“It’s a man named Toto. He just left the greenhouse.”

A guy coming out of the greenhouse was chatting with Iris.

It had to be Toto.

All seemed fine.

“Does he feel something for Iris?”

“Please, listen to them yourself.”

I knew that Toto was not in love with Iris, but the prince would not take me at my word.

He was listening to them talk.

“I will get rid of him.”

“Stop!”

It was the second time that day I had to prevent a fight.

Oh, come on! He was already leaning towards violence!

“No, they’re just friends!”

“Well, that’s fine, then.”

He looked like a tyrant. In just one moment he could snap like that!

While I was trying to hold the prince back, and those two were chatting happily, I noticed that Toto’s complexion changed.

A noise came from the doghouse we had made the day before.

Oh, Goru seemed to have woken up.

Goru jumped out of the doghouse and ran towards Iris at full speed. Along the way, he changed his target into Toto, and began chasing him with a threatening look.

I think he was just jesting.

I absolutely loved that dog.

“Bad, bad boy, Alfredo, stop it.”

After Iris spoke, the dog immediately calmed down.

Toto was about to die.

Poor guy.

“Hey, since when do you have that dog?”

“A couple of days.”

“Did you call him Alfredo?”

“No, he’s Goru.”

“Eh! But Iris just called him Alfredo!”

“It’s Goru.”

“... Goru?”

It was the second anniversary of the birth of the Goroist faction.

It was a bit of a stretch, I know.

While I was dissuading the prince, the aforementioned Goru now looked towards us.

He clearly couldn’t see us behind the bushes, but it was like he was aware of us.

“Did he smell us?”

Was it really the case?

Okay, was it time for the two stalkers to come out of the shadows?

However, Goru soon lost interest and got distracted by something else.

All the attention gathering on our hideout faded away.

“Well, we’re safe apparently.”

“I won’t do this again. I am literally sweating right now.”

“I still don’t understand.”

Was Iris really depressed?

Well, she looked absolutely fine.

When Iris left the field, she did not return to the dorm.

The day was already dawning.

Even though it was dinner time, she left the school garden on her own.

The sunset was gradually turning to red.

The prince blushed while looking at the horizon.

“Yeah, not bad.”

Iris sat down in the field and pulled out some cheap paper from her pocket.

Cheap making, the texture was also thin and rough.

Iris was staring at it.

She was not just staring. Apparently there was something written on it. She read very carefully.

Indeed, there lied our answer.

“Koibuma?! He gave it to her!?”

“No, probably somebody in her family gave it to her.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, the nobles do not use such cheap paper.”

Iris folded back the piece of paper.

Perhaps she was thinking about her family, that she had not seen for more than six months.

It looked like the prince could be right.

Iris was depressed after all. She was worried because of her family.

“Now I see.”

“Does Iris want to see her family? But it’s only three years, why does she worry so much?”

“Well, things are different for us, it’s hard for you to walk in our shoes.”

I knew that feeling.

Make the prince understand would be difficult.

“Then you can help me understand.”

“The winter holidays are coming, and Iris does not plan to return home. She thinks that if she studies more, she will have better chances of finding a good job.”

“There will be more good opportunities in the future.”

The prince showed a huge grin as soon as he said that. What was on his mind?

“Oh, is it the Autumn Sports Festival?”

“Yes, the only opportunity for parents to visit the school will come soon.”

“So Iris might have been thinking about her family all along, and we were not aware of it.”

“We were not until now. I will fix everything.”

I realized the prince was going to use his position to do something.

“Iris’ family are commoners, they they cannot participate.”

“If they will be able to see their daughter, I’m sure they will be happy about it.”

The prince looked really motivated.

“Please do not tell this to anybody, especially the other people living with her. Think about the whole picture.”

“How many gold coins would that be?”

We were talking about gold! Really!

Things couldn’t go any better.

“20 would be enough, is it? Please keep it confidential”

I got on the prince’s proposal in the spirit of having money if I had it.

it’s not a bad thing to wish that girl want to see her family If you do not do too much, you should move in a good direction! I believed and took the devil’s invitation.

Thus the rite of the iris’ family summoning was done.

Blacksmith V4 C3 It was the day of the Autumn Sports Festival.

On that day the students had a chance to show the results of their day-to-day training. Some people were not enthusiastic about it, while others just loves it.

One of the latter was entering my room right then.

“You look on fire, prince.”

“Oh, I’ve done quite a bit for the sports festival today.”

I know that the prince was impatient to show to Iris what he could do. Because given his athleticism, unless he had an accident, he couldn’t be defeated in the individual event.

“Don’t get injured, don’t get hurt.”

“Who do you think I am? Come on, look at me.”

Perhaps he thought that Iris really cared about the individual event and would cheer him. I was smiling.

I wished I were right, but I wasn’t sure.

“By the way, Kurri, did you remember to invite the family of Iris?”

“Yes. We had to invite them because Iris is depressed, correct?”

“Yes. Tell my name when they ask for your invitation, later today at the festival.”

“Wait a minute!”

“Don’t you have a grudge with my father?”

“He’s still a noble, there is no problem.”

I was really surprised by the prince ‘s words.

“Prince, have you invited me personally?”

“Oh, what is it? Is there something wrong?”

“I thought I would be invited through the school. If I am to say your name as an invitation, I couldn’t refuse even if I wanted to, and that troubles me.”

“Is that so?”

This prince, I still didn’t understand my power upon him.

I mean, all of a sudden ordinary people were meddling with the prince, it was quite unsettling.

“Huh, I should have taken care of that.”

“I do not know who should have done what, but if Iris is pleased I’m ok with it, that’s all.”

He was still not understanding.

“Well, Iris’ family members will arrive soon, shall we pick them up?”

“Are you going to welcome them personally!? Do you want to kill them?”

“What are you talking about? Do you mean to go greed them on your own?”

“Please, think about it, you might miss the beginning of the festival!”

“You’re over-exaggerating, end of the story.”

It was impossible to stop the prince, so we reached the entrance of the school. A coach arrived. It was supposed to carry Iris’ family. I felt uncomfortable.

While I was waiting with such a sense of uneasiness, I heard familiar voices calling my name.

When I looked up, my parents were smiling in the coach.

The looked much happier than I did.

“Dad, mom, welcome.”

“Oh, you look fabulous, my daughter. And look at this wonderful banquet, let’s have something to eat and have fun!”

“Oh, no need to hurry, it’s nothing special.”

My parents were only concerned about the food. I wonder if it is true, that travelling does that.

“Hellan, it’s been a long time.”

The prince stepped in between us. Oh, that development could bring nothing good.

“Oh, isn’t this prince Ark. I am terribly sorry, we just had a long voyage.”

“No, don’t you worry. If you too would make me the honour of being your guest next summer, I will gladly come and visit your lands, Hellan.”

“Yes, absolutely.”

The prince bid them their pardon, and the coach with my parents left.

My father looked pissed.

It was because of the prince’s manners. If you are not used to him, it’s inevitable.

We began feeling worried about Iris’ family.

“Huh, are you going to give up on waiting for them?”

“No, I won’t!”

The tension was building up!

A few minutes later, a luxurious horse-drawn carriage approached the school. It had to be that one! Definitely!

The prince looked relieved. The same feeling was manifested by my face.

I was wondering what Iris’ family, who worked the field, could have been thinking while traveling in such a coach.

It must have not felt comfortable to play the part of Cinderella.

The coach finally arrived, and the door opened.

A woman with simple clothes came out. Her face resembled that of Iris. She was definitely Iris’ mother.

Even though she was about 40 years old, there was some kind hidden beauty somewhere in her appearance.

“Oh, this is such a beautiful place, I feel like I’ve entered a fairy tale.”

Iris’ mother was admiring the place with her mouth open. Then, a boy and a girl came out.

Even if I said “a boy”, he looked almost as old as us.

He could have been as old as Rahsa, perhaps? I wondered if the two girls were younger than him. He still somehow resembled them, anyway.

They were both beautiful, just like Iris.

They looked around, and seemed even more impressed than their mother. Their eyes were shining.

The prince was looking at that scene, and he felt immensely happy. I hoped he would wait for a while before speaking.

“Welcome, I am Ark Kudan, and I am delighted to welcome the family of my friend Iris.”

The prince bowed with a flawless movement, paired with his flawless appearance.

Iris’ mother opened her mouth even more, incapable of containing her surprise.

“Oh, did the prince himself... really invite us?”

She saw that elegant man, and figured out he himself was the prince.

“Yes, of course, for my friend... milady!? Are you ok?”

Before the prince could complete his sentence, Iris’ mother fainted.

She clearly didn’t have the same iron will of her daughter.

The unexpected presence of the prince was too much for her to bear.

Before she fell to the ground, Iris’ younger brother caught her.

“Hey! I do not know what it means to be a prince, but you are putting too much stress on my mother!”

Her brother looked quite masculine.

The prince said nothing, and stood there looking quite shocked.

“I think we should bring her to the infirmary at once.”

“I can carry her, shall you make way?”

“Yes, sure. Please, follow me.”

The situation was still lingering, and the prince was still in a state of shock. He had made Iris’ mother faint, and now her brother disliked him. There was nothing he could do.

There must have been some way to make ammend. Surely.

He took Iris’s mother on his shoulder and carried her to the infirmary.

There were a lot of empty beds, so I just had her put down in the first one I noticed.

Then I called a doctor and had him visit her.

“It’s just a temporary loss of consciousness.”

“Thank you.”

I thanked the doctor, and let Iris’ mother sleeps in the bed.

“My redhead comrade... or should I say “noblewoman”?”

“No, redhead comrade will do.”

“Did the doctor ask for any money?”

“No, the school will take care of that.”

“Well, that’s nice. I got some gold coins before I came here, but I wanted to give them to my sister.”

Unbelievable! Even a commoner was willing to give me gold coins!

Prince, how come you just couldn't get yourself to do it, uh?

Anyway, Iris' brother was a good person. Of course he wanted to give that money to his sister, and not waste it over a stupid accident. I would have never accepted it.

“Hey, redhead comrade, this bed is soft, I’ve never seen one so comfortable.”
“I think you should take advantage of the situation and rest for a while, don’t you?”

“Is it okay?”

“Of course, I will take full responsibility, don’t you worry.”

Iris' brother smiled happily. Her sister, who was hiding behind her older brother, was also listening.

The brother put a hand on her shoulder and whispered.

“Is it alright?”

“Of course.”

They laid down on a vacant bed.

They couldn't hide their surprise when they sat.

“Oh my, it’s so accomodating!”

“That’s right, I feel like I’m being sucked in!”

“Redhead comrade, you look strange, I’m sorry, I guess we are behaving unappropriately?”

“No, I did the same the first time.”

“Redhead comrade.”

That time it was the sister, who pulled my sleeve and said.

“I am Asia. My mother is Clarissa.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, my sister always tells me to introduce myself, but I forgot. I’m Mikal. Thank you.”

“The same could be said for me, I have been rude. I am Kururi, I’m in the same class of your sister, Iris.

As soon as I said Iris' name, they became a lot more talkative.

“Is our sister doing well?”

“She is a good student, but it’s tough here.”

“Does our sister eat properly?”

“She always puts other people’s priorities ahead of her own.”

I saw they truly loved their sister.

Uh, I had forgotten that the prince was still waiting for me.

“Don’t you worry about anything, your older sister is much stronger than you think, and you will meet her soon.”

The two were really looking forward to seeing their sister.

“Hey, would you call her here?”

“Pretty please!?”

“Wait here, and don’t worry!”

I winked and immediately left the infirmary.

Well, how could I tell them Iris was not aware of their presence at the school? ... for the time being, I had to find the prince.

Volume 4 Chapter 4

“Why do you feel so down, prince?”

I spoke to the prince who was grieving at the entrance of the school. He was obviously depressed.

It was unbelievable. All of his efforts had lead to an accident that made the mother of a girl he loved faint.

“Huh, I screwed up.”

“You did.”

“Hey, I’d appreciate a bit of support.”

I was being selfish.

“I don’t get rewarded for caring about the prince’s feelings.”

He gave me an astonished gaze. Then, he looked bored and sighed deeply.

“You always think about gold, gold, and more gold, don’t you ever think of anything else? Don’t you strive to have a pure heart, like I do?”

And yet he loved to spend time with me, didn’t he? Besides, it was my future we were talking about!

“That is a feeling I cannot always afford to indulge into.”

“What are you talking about? You must have lived in luxury, what is going on in your home? Are you burdened with debt?”

There was a misunderstanding.

My father was not exceedingly wealthy, but he hadn’t fallen as down as to make debts.

He was fine, and so was our family.

I felt the prince was trying to get a weight out of his chest. It was serious.

“As soon as you thought you might get something, the light in your eyes changed.”

He seemed hesitant.

I wondered, did it show that much? Well, I guess we were at it eventually.

“It’s nothing, really, you just seemed to be feeling anxious about your future, so I just wanted to give you something that would guarantee you a better future.”

“Prince...”

I held the prince’s hand with both hands. Would I let it go? I did not want to let go of the warm feeling of the prince anymore.

“Prince, you are truly pure-hearted.”

“I feel like a cash dispenser.”

The prince pushed me away, and started walking.

“Well, future is built on work; so work hard, Kururi Helan...”

I followed him in a hurry.

Well, I never said what I wanted from him.

We were going in circles, and that story began to look ridiculous.

You are not such a bad person, are you? Prince, you can’t think that!

We reached Iris’s room, to tell her that her family had come. The prince, all of a sudden, became nervous.

“About that reward.”

“Wow, it’s not like we just had an argument over that! We’re in front of Iris’ room, would you kindly...?”

“I’m talking about the payment for following Iris yesterday, I have not received it yet. I need a good guarantee for my future, so please, just give me something.”

“Ah, you heartless bastard... eh, I’ll give you this!”

In saying that, he picked a golden bracelet covered in precious gems out of his pocket.

Why did he keep such a thing in his pocket? It looked pricey!

“Prince, this is...”

“I meant to give it to Iris’ mother, but as you keep on pestering me... well, I’m tired of hearing you talking about your future, so I guess that will do as your reward.”

“How much money is it worth?”

“I DON’T KNOW!”

In hearing the prince shout, Iris opened the room’s door. Iris, looking out of the room, saw those two noisy people having an argument.

“What? Arc and Kururi, what are you doing here? Were you looking for me?”
“Well, oh, oh, Kururi wanted to see you, but because the girls’ dorm feels so empty, he asked me to come with her.”

That was a crappy excuse. We were both there to tell her about her family.

“Isn’t it, Kururi.”

The prince gave me a smiling face that looked like a carving on a wooden mask. I had to back him up.

“... yes, exactly.”

I had just received the bracelet, now I had to play the part. I had to remember not to take bribes, in the future.

“Are the two of you good friends? If you are afraid of coming alone, you should have invited Toto.”

The prince had a serious face.

“What’s up?”

Iris was relentless.

“Yeah, Iris. Since we are comrades now, the prince said that it would give you a considerable position regardless of what the future holds for you. Isn’t it the case, prince?”

I had said it before, so I might as well say it again.

Why didn’t I weight the words I had put in front of Iris?

“Well, that’s right, I made a promise from comrade to comrade.”

I just used that word, but what was all that “comrades” thing?

I wondered since when were we using that word.

“Well, I’m your friend, and friendships should not be poisoned with schemes about one’s interest in the future. Am I right?”

It was a good observation. She was right. 100% correct, but I had forgotten that. That would be good for everyone to remember.

“Yes, friendship is something about the person alone!”

He emphasized every word, and paired them with forced smiles.

Iris had broken my spirit, and I couldn’t go on talking about that topic.

Since I didn’t know what to say anymore, I subdued.

“Kururi, did you have something to tell me?”

Oops, I completely forgot about the reason for our visit.

Should I talk first?

Iris’ mom was asleep in the infirmary! Right then!

I hesitated, I didn’t want to tell her. I felt uncomfortable.

“Iris, I got a new variety tea, would you drink some with me?”

The prince hit me with his elbow. I made a deaf growl.

“Well, it doesn’t seem anything serious, why were you so hesitant to ask me that?”

“It is an exquisite tea, so I thought the prince might come with us as well!”

Iris’s gaze darted both of us.

Focused, wide round eyes were staring at the prince.

Usually no man would have been unhappy to be stared by those eyes; but sometimes they could make a man feel uneasy.

The prince was no exception.

“Actually, down below... there is a nice sweet cake, how about having it together?”

We were trying! We were trying to have Iris come down and meet her family!

“Thank you, it should be perfect along with Kururi’s tea.”

With a smile, Iris completely opened the door.

“You are both hiding something from me.”

I would not give away the secret, no matter what!

I hit the prince with the elbow. He immediately hit me back.

“Can you stop behaving like children, and tell me everything already? I won’t get mad at you, I promise.”

She would get mad.

She would absolutely get mad.

“Ok, first of all, the prince did it.”(en:ruthless kururi is ruthless...)

“The prince did... what?”

Iris made a strange face. I wondered what she thought the prince might have done.

The prince was about to speak, but Iris spoke first.

“It’s ok if you don’t want to admit that you stole my underwear, I know some guys do that, but I will not forgive you the next time.”

What?! We had nothing to do with underwear thefts!

“No! Iris, I didn’t do that! Seriously! I don’t know who stole your underwear!”

“Iris, it’s true! The prince is telling the truth! We didn’t steal any underwear!”

As we were vehemently trying to defend ourselves from that accusation of theft, we ended up raising our voices, and with the word “underwear” being cried in the corridor, people from the nearby rooms immediately opened their doors.

“Eh? What? What?”

“Who is doing what with underwear?”

As a result of desperately trying to get out of that situation, we had only made it even more embarrassing for ourselves!

“Ok, we know nothing of underwear thefts! Everyone please calm down!”

I felt exhausted.

At the end of the day I was still a noble, and I was there screaming about underwear.

The dorm gradually got quiet, so I finally got back to talking to Iris.

“I am sorry, it seems I have misunderstood.”

“No, don’t worry.”

“Ahahah, I put you at the center of a funny misunderstanding, and I don’t feel like getting angry anymore.”

The prince looked very shaken after being accused of underwear theft, so I thought it would be better if only I talked.

“Actually, Iris, your family came to the school...”

I finally managed to say it. I felt like I had been relieved of a massive weight. Acting is better than planning.

I had been very clear with my words, but for a moment Iris did not understand.

“... my family? You mean my mother, Mikal and Asia?” (En: should it be Michael or Mikal? For now Mikal...)

“Yeah, they are all at the school right now.”

Iris covered her mouth with both hands, and she ran away without saying another word.

The prince and me followed her.

“Iris, wait, wait! They are in the infirmary!”

Iris usually didn’t act so impulsively.

I hadn’t anticipated that.

Now Iris was running surprisingly fast, and we were being slowed down by the people in the corridors.

The door of the infirmary opened vigorously.

Inside, Mikal and Asia looked very vivacious.

And Iris’ mother, Clarissa, was lying in the bed, awake.

“Iris...”

It was Iris’ mother that noticed her first.

Iris knelt and hugged her mother.

Soon after, her two siblings also joined them.

Iris hugged her family with bright eyes, a huge smile on her face.

Me and the prince closed the infirmary's door.

It was better for us two bastards to leave.

We went out and looked at each other's face.

There were a lot of things to talk about, but... for the time being, we felt good.

Volume 4 Chapter 5

(Kururi > redhead comrade > carrot (pie) Mikal naming) The situation resolved without Iris getting angry.

I was calm because she seemed to get along with her family, and even the Prince had breathed a sigh of relief in finding her.

The latter, subsequently called by Rail, disappeared somewhere, leaving unsuccessful the work he had to do for the sports festival.

What an anger!!!

To me, however, no assignment was given in particular, so I was just waiting my turn to arrive. Also for that reason I was entertaining with Mikal, Iris' brother.

Three girls left him to me and – all happy – they went at the festival, telling me that Iris would be much more relaxed knowing that her brother would have been entrusted to me.

“This campus is so great, isn’t it, Carrot Pie?!”

“It is! Tell me, Mikal, what is your favorite food?”

We were heading to rows of stalls selling food.

Even though, we were not walking by hand – Mikal was already too big for that – I felt that his presence at my side drew the girls’ gaze.

Probably growing he would have been as popular as Iris was.

“The mochi which my sister grills in winter!” (“mochi” = in English is translated with “rice cake”)

Too bad we weren’t seeing it around.

Maybe he wasn’t understanding that I actually wanted to buy him some food at the stalls.

“And what about yours?”

“Hm... mutton’s meat!”

Mikal looked at me disgusted: I was obviously kidding, but I said it just because I imagined that he would have reacted in such a way.

“Come on, let’s eat. There are so many stalls that it would be a shame not to take anything!”

We headed for one which was run by some upper class students: instead of acting with their usual noble behaviour, they were looking to have a lot of fun. It was a cheerful atmosphere.

“These sweets look so good! Could we have two of them, please?”

“Sure! Two more are offered, since you are both very nice!” said one of the students, winking and giving us the sweets – which were called Pince. How lucky we were been to have gifted with “a cute face”!

“Did you see? They gave us two for free for your merit, Mikal!”

“No, Carrot! You are the most beautiful pale among all the guys I’ve seen so far!”

How dear! After such a compliment I would have bought him anything.

That Pince was very fashionable among the good girls in the capital, it was very refined and so small that I did not even seem to have eaten it: it had the size of a biscuit, and you did not even feel it get into your stomach after having chewed and ingested it .

“How is it? Good?”

“These aristocrats eat strange things. It’s already over, but I did not realize it...”

Exactly the same impression I had, though, in my opinion, even the aristocracy, in spite of the areas being given, wasn’t able to appreciate such a refinement.

Since Mikal seemed to like mochi, we headed for a stall which were selling them too: maybe we would have had a discount here also, as we were cute!

Sure that he would have liked it, I bought him one, but his face after the first bite did not seem very convinced:

“What? Don’t you like it?”

“There’s too much cream in there and it does not look like eating mochi ... it’s a

little gummy!"

Clear! He wanted a mochi which tastes like... mochi, he did not care about cream.

Unfortunately there were no stalls selling something even vaguely resembling.

After having passed the most "refined" stalls, began to appear more modest ones, which had nothing "aristocratic": in fact, they were selling such strange things which made me discourage from give it a try.

I bumped into a boy I knew:

"Oh! And what are you doing here, Toto?"

"Is it not clear? I'm selling my masterpieces"

Toto looked at his products, sitting in a chair with a scowl face: students usually sell their things for fun, but he was taking the job seriously. On the other hand, he was selling food supplements made with dried herbs, something which, in his intent, should have attracted high society lords!

"Excuse me but, if you do not buy anything.. could you at least move around, please?"

"Oh, sorry"

A customer arrived

"How effective are they?"

"Try them and be surprised, I assure you!"

A good-looking gentleman approached him, and, satisfied, left with a bunch of dried herbs.

"Those strange things get sold quite well..."

"They are not strange. My customers consider them of excellent quality. You will also have understood it by looking at them!"

Since it wasn't really my bag, I did not have a precise opinion.

"And who is he?" said Toto, turning to Mikal with a threatening air. The usual misanthropic. He didn't even like dogs!

"Iris' brother, Mikal"

"Really? Hi Mikal!"

With my big surprise, Toto reached for the boy first and the two shook hands.

“Don’t you have troubles with him?”

“If he is Alice’s brother, he must definitely be a good guy”

It was the first time I saw him smiling in such a way.

“By the way, which competition are you going to take, Toto?”

“200 meters relay. The shortest. I can do it with my strength.”

“Me too! Whoever wins passes to the semifinals and eventually to the final,”

Toto did not know anything, but I think he wasn’t seriously interested in the race.

He was more interested in trying to sell me one of his supplements.

After having greeted him, Mikal said, “I like that guy!”

“Oh do you? Don’t you find him a little strange?”

“Whoever speaks well of my sister is definitely a good person!”

What a good kid, I thought, caressing his head.

“Even my sister does it so often, but I’m no longer a child!”

“What? Caressing your head? Even if you are no longer a child there is nothing wrong with it, you know?”

There were so many people in the world who, although they would have wanted a caress, could not get it. People who are too tall, for example!

“But you, Carrot, are you my sister’s boyfriend?”

What???

Totally surprised, I did not respond immediately.

“I’ve always wondered about that, but I’ve never found the right time to ask for it. However, I would agree to let you be it, so in that case...”

“I’m not, don’t worry.”

I faked not to see that Mikal was happy with that statement, and we kept walking.

We reached a place away from the chaos, from which a good smell were coming, it was a campus area where almost nobody were using to pass and where there were no stalls; Mikal, however, let himself be driven from his own sneer.

We came in front of a large tree under which someone was making a bonfire.

This one had long hair – hence I knew it was a girl – but her face was covered with a mask and a pair of colored glasses. However, I had the impression that we had already met before.

“Doesn’t she look a little weird to you too?”

“Indeed...”

“There’s nothing weird about it,” she said, “how did you get here? Following the clues?”

“Following the smell...”

“Ah!!

It seemed we had interrupted her.

Her voice, even if stifled by the mask, sounded familiar to me.

Who among my acquaintances could be so strange to lit a fire in that place?

“What are you doing here? There’s a scent!,” I asked hesitantly.

She smiled at me:

“I’m roasting sweet potatoes, they are very nutritious, you know? These in particular are difficult to cultivate, they require many attentions. I took care of them all the year. I had hidden throughout the campus some clues addressed to those who love potatoes but, apparently, no one has noticed them.”

It’s hard to notice them in such an immense campus.

She had only 10 and, as we were the first customers, she gave us one each. She took the potatoes out of the fire and handed them out to Mikal. Mikal happily opened the bag with his potato and bit it.

“Very good!”, he said eating greedily. From his mouth was coming out the boiling potato steam.

After that compliment, the girl burst in pleasure.

On the other hand, I waited for my potato getting a little colder; after having discarded it, I was going to remove the peel, but the girl stopped me: “Wait! Eat with, please.”

Even Mikal had eaten it without peeling it; maybe that was how the label wanted to be done!

I tried to eat it as they were suggesting: in fact, it was very sweet and melted in the mouth, it was great.

“Very good, I have never eaten such a good sweet potato in my life!”

“I’m glad to hear that!”

Embraced by happiness, the girl gave us a third: not because we were cute, but because her potatoes were.

Mikal was all happy, but I, on the way back, could not give me peace.

“What wrong?”

“Nothing.”

It was not a sincere answer, but I found it a bad idea talking to him about what it was making me upset.

“I like that girl! Even though she is an aristocrat, she treats her potatoes with much respect. She will surely be a good wife!”

He was such a smart boy!

Thinking back, I knew that mysterious girl was supposed to be Eliza.

Of course she was not doing anything wrong, but I should have kept silence and pretended not to know anything. If I would have revealed it to someone, maybe it would have been unfair to her potatoes!

Volume 4 Chapter 6

After eating the Eliza-special potato and feeling energized, the time for my match had arrived.

I properly stretched my body during the waiting time. You would get hurt if you suddenly do some intense work-out, you see. I refuse to have to live with an aching leg.

Crossing my hands above my head and bending my body left and right, I gauged my opponents. No one really stood out as amazing.

The 200-metre race was the one with the most entries and it had 3 rounds: the preliminaries, semi-final, and final. Of course, that is if one is able to advance though.

In the preliminaries, it would be fine if I could just get rank 2 or above within my group.

While I was thinking that I could probably make it, the preparations had started.

With sound amplifying magic applied on the device, they had started to introduce the athletes coming in each line.

The player's name, and of course his family name too, were introduced in a grand way.

Not only are the guardians here to watch them, but it was also a time when the heirs' of such-and-such families were appealed.

"Now then, next up in the 5th line is the next head of the now prospering Helan territory – Kururi!"

I was introduced, so I greeted them by raising my hand. I noticed my nonchalant parents, and the Iris family energetically waving towards me.

And also, unexpectedly, there were quite a few cheers from the daughters of the nobles.

Even though it was really surprising but I guess it is only the natural reaction since my territory is thriving so much.

Well, it is not that one wouldn't be happy after being cheered so much, so I got even more motivated.

It was almost starting time, so I was kinda regretting not practicing a little bit more.

The signal gun echoed.

My start was perfect and I rushed forward with momentum.

It was a straight 200-metre race, so it was hard assessing the distance, but I gave it my all without thinking too deeply.

And as a result, I finished in first place.

Wiping the sweat off and starting to feel my breath also getting hoarse, I felt myself getting excited.

With this, I am through with the preliminaries.

Well, I guess this much is quite enough to uphold the family name. I think I at least cleared the minimum requirements.

After the race, I visited Toto who had been working diligently in his business after being quickly eliminated.

“I watched the race. That was a good run.”

“Thanks. More importantly, let me rest here for a while.”

“Alright~”

And like that, I decided to rest in Toto's booth where he was selling some suspicious vitality medicine.

While having lunch there, I helped him deal with the dodgy, old men.

While chewing on my food, I asked Toto about today's sales.

“Well, as you can see it is going extremely well. Almost to the point that I feel like I will run out of stock. Ah, almost forgot. A shop also opened to bet on who

will win amongst the upperclassmen and I also placed a bet myself.”

“Even something like that is being held, eh? So, who did you bet on?”

“On you, of course. The scaling factor was pretty good and I also knew you were pretty athletic, so I went and bet on you.”

“So, how much will you get back if I win?”

Honestly, the sum he whispered into my ear was pretty surprising. As expected of the nobles’ school, the scale is huge even in something unscrupulous.

“You will win, won’t you?”

“.....”

Now then, as the people wishing for my victory had increased by one, I decided to do my best for the semi-finals.

As expected, the members of my group who have advanced were all warmed up for the semi-finals.

As one would expect, winning through this will not be that easy.

But even still, the money matter granted me energy like never before and I broke through the semi-finals as well.

Well, sadly I won’t be the one receiving it but still, I ended up doing my best.

Now all that is left are the finals.

Now that it has come this far, it looks like Toto is also getting serious and is eagerly waiting for the result of his gambling, totally ignoring his other business.

In the finals, there were the people I had totally forgotten about.

Firstly, the super elite, Rail, who had been hidden till now. The coolest pattern of sneakily entering the competition and remaining till the finals. In fact, the cheers from the girls were also unreasonably high.

And then, of course, the prince had also remained.

The pattern most popular amongst passionate men, to enter firmly and remain

till the finals with all their might.

His eyes were burning with passion but even before that, he was probably seeing Iris celebrating his victory. The faster he realizes that that is an illusion, the better for him. You only get popular for being fast till middle school, you know?

He's getting even more cheers than Rail. The elegance he originally had with a face burning with fighting spirit. It must be an irresistible scene for the girls who fangirl over him. Too bad those cheers do not reach the person himself at all.

“Prince Arc, do your best~”

Mixed with lots of other cheers, Iris' cheers could also be heard. I ended up noticing the prince grin as he heard it.

.....Found a gap in the prince's heart. Just you wait, Toto, the money just got a little closer.

In addition, it looks like Ulsain-senpai, who is known as the 'Swift Horse', will be also be a difficult opponent.

“Oi, Rail. Why are you also remaining in the finals? I thought you weren't that interested in these.”

“Because the prince is being fanatical about an interesting delusion. I thought I would win and see what kind of face he makes.”

I see. As expected of the black-hearted man. He is spouting some terrible things with a grin on his face.

But it might actually be better to bring the prince to his senses.

“I shall not lose to anyone!”

Declared the prince, taking an imposing stance beside us while we were

talking sneakily.

It's too hot, so I would like him to keep his distance.

Me, who was running for money; the prince, who was running for love, and Rail, who was running for his enjoyment.

I don't know what's going to happen but, I probably will once I start running. And so, we lined up at the start line.

Just as the signal was heard, everyone splendidly took off.

Even amongst that, the masterful start by Rail had him rushing towards the goal. With the whole momentum itself, his acceleration was showing no signs of stopping. He plans to settle this at once.

I wonder what Rail is feeling now. Surely, he must be having the most fun. Even for the prince, I can't let the one with the most crooked wish win!

Once more, I clenched my teeth and caught up to that speed. As expected though, the prince and Ulsain-senpai had also caught up.

However, at this point, Ulsain-senpai had an unlikely breakdown! The most popular one had dropped out.

The prince and I were desperately chasing after Rail. Gradually, the difference... the difference.. the difference kept on increasing!

That man! He is absurdly fast in sprints!

In the end, Rail won by a huge lead and the prince and I finished at the same time.

The prince had collapsed. Toto also crumbled down.

All ambitions were smashed. Just one man remained, grinning and saying something like "Haha, I worked up a nice sweat~".

In that fashion, the athletic festival closed its curtain with the black-hearted man stealing the show.

"Are you leaving already?"

Iris reluctantly escorted her family.

In the back, the prince and I were on standby.

“Yes, we will leave now. Just being able to see you being lively in itself was worth coming here.”

Said Iris’ mother with a gentle smile.

Mikal and Asia were also smiling at their elder sister.

“Then, we shall be going now, okay? Iris, it’s okay to come back anytime you feel tired, alright?”

“Yea, but I will be fine. I am having quite a lot of fun here.”

“That is true. It seems like you also have good friends so you will probably be fine”

After hugging her lightly at the end, Iris’ family left.

Iris watched over as that carriage gradually drove off into the distance.

The prince and I had also kept her company but my parents passed by midway saying “Oii, Kururi! It was a lotta fun~!” completely destroying the mood, for which I would like to be forgiven as my parents cannot read the atmosphere whatsoever.

Botsuraku Youtei Nanode, Kajishokunin wo Mezasu

Vol. 4 Chapter 7

“Is this the blacksmith within the school?”

“..... Probably not.”

Just when I thought someone with proper etiquette knocked on the door this time, the topic of their conversation was odd as usual.

I do not recall opening a smithy and I am still only a student, so I closed the door.

“Please wait a minute! I am here to request a job! I heard this place had a skilled blacksmith.”

Skilled blacksmith?!

Alright, I guess I will listen to what they have to say.

The one I invited into the room was Jeremy Toariz, a third year of this school.

He is very a sociable and simple person. At the very least, I still have a good impression of him.

I do get many peculiar visitors so I ended up developing this weird habit of being on guard.

He is an upperclassman after all so, to not be rude on my part, I served him black tea.

Definitely not because I was praised.

“Nice to meet you, I heard there was a student who built swords in this dorm room.”

He said so, sounding doubtful, but as he looked around and saw the surrounding, I saw that doubt lifting.

I am only doing this as a hobby so he is probably misunderstanding something.

“It looks like the rumour is true. From the looks of your workshop, you seem to be doing this everyday.”

“Yes, at this stage it is only still a hobby though.”

“I see....”

Jeremy-senpai looked a little embarrassed after knowing the truth.

He realized he was being impertinent.

He looked like a guy with common sense so that was a relief.

“But even still, there are many eye witnesses. That there is someone who makes swords in this room and that he is also really good at it. That, even to the untrained eyes, it looks very well-made and strong. After hearing such rumors, I also got a little excited, you see.”

It looks like my evaluation among the upperclassmen is at a certain level already.

While it does make me really happy but inside me, I feel like I am still going through the training phase. So officially accepting a job request really makes me nervous.

“I am Kururi Helan, a first year. A lot of things happened and I ended up studying smithing, but I am still in the training phase and I strongly feel I cannot call myself a proper blacksmith. My teacher did approve of me but I still think that it would be too early to accept customer requests.”

“Really? But you are quite popular. It is by no means a lie. There are other

people besides me who have interest in you.”

“Is that so....?”

Nonetheless I do like getting complimented after all.

What shall I do?

“For the time being, I will listen to your request. It all depends on the situation though.”

“I see! Glad to hear that. Please, listen to it!”

It felt like it would draw on, so I served another cup of black tea.

Definitely not because I was praised.

It looks like Jeremy-senpai has an elder brother.

And on top of working at the royal capital, he is a noble who works at the royal castle.

A guy really passionate about his job and quite the stubborn person as well.

He is someone who does not have any hobbies either so even his younger brother, Jeremy-senpai, does not know what he looks forward to in life. People like that tend to like life in itself but, well, I guess that is irrelevant.

And it looks like the stubborn elder brother of his wrote a letter to him after a few years.

He does not have a reliable senpai, neither a cute kouhai nor any friends so he had no choice but to write a letter to his younger brother Jeremy.

Jeremy, who had normally thought that having no news of his elder brother

was a proof of his well-being, could not hide surprise after receiving a letter.

When he opened the letter in a hurry, inside he found contents that even he, the younger brother, could not comprehend.

Firstly, the letter started out with this one sentence.

‘Recently, I feel this somewhat pain in my heart.’

Jeremy covered his face with his hands.

After reading the contents of the letter, feeling embarrassed instantly, he was lamenting his brother’s awkwardness.

It also came as a surprise at the same time but, as their father is also a stubborn person, he had thought that happiness would also come to his stubborn brother.

And so, his feeling of embarrassment had surpassed that of his surprise.

Being a stubborn person, his brother who was working at the backline, fell in love with a woman in the frontlines, in the Order of Knights.

And that woman is also quite famous for possessing a wild personality and being a skilled knight.

A person who is said to be, in no way, wife-material.

To the extent that someone in the Order of Knights also boasted that -"If there's a man willing to take her as a wife, I will treat him to a 100 barrels of alcohol as it is obvious that she will trouble!"

Those two, having very contrastive personalities, met at a very surprising place.

While Jeremy's brother was in the public bath late at night located in the royal capital, that woman in the Order of Knights came in.

Of course, full naked, on top of that showing no signs of embarrassment as if she had owned the place.

"Th-this is the males bath actually...."

"Ah? So what?"

And it seems the woman then went on to wash her body, not caring about Jeremy's elder brother at all.

And that his brother saw that and fell in love....

Ehh?!

Leaking my surprise out like that, I was relieved to see that Jeremy-senpai had not noticed.

I was appalled that there are people in the world who fall in love in such an unusual way.

It seems like his brother normally hides the important parts with a towel even when between men.

Perhaps, rather than seeing it with an erotic glance, it really was an impact strong enough to change his world.

When I said that, Jeremy-senpai also agreed.

"He probably keeps the line between that pretty strong, I think. In my brother's letter, he wrote how he had met her."

'She had not felt shy at all in exposing her body. I felt as if I was looking at a War God. Ah, I cannot forget that. Ah, I cannot stop thinking about her. Ah, the world seems to feel kinda hazy. I have probably caught a serious illness. Even the famed doctors of the royal capital gave forced laughs and did not tell me the name of the disease. What shall I do, my beloved brother? Please save your elder brother.'

"Hmm, it looks to be a pretty serious illness."

"I know, right? It is a quite serious wound. I never thought the day would come where that stubborn brother would call me by the words 'my beloved

brother'....."

After saying what he had wanted to say, Jeremy-senpai wore a face as if he had just come after seeing a weird monster.

Certainly, being exposed to a whole new side of his brother, I have no doubt that the shock he received is pretty big.

"And so, how did you end up coming here then? I cannot see the link at all."

"Ah, yes. I almost forgot. And then I gave an advice to my brother. That he could give her some kind of a present. However, this is about my brother. He will surely hesitate to even greet her. He can't think of an excuse to give her a present so he keeps sending me letters here everyday."

Jeremy-senpai continued, looking all worn-out.

"Oh no, what if she doesn't like me after I give her a flower? What if she has some other guy she likes?' -letters with content like this keep getting delivered to me everyday."

"....You have been going through a lot too, haven't you?"

"Haa, and so, I told him, ask someone who is well-informed about girlfriends about what you should give her. And so he got to know that she had wanted a sword. And so I told him to just send her a sword then but even after looking at very good products, he cannot bring himself to like them. And so he requested me to choose a nice sword for her."

"It feels like you have quite the difficult brother."

"Well, even still, I am quite indebted to him. Moreover, it has been known for a long time that he was hard to handle, so he is probably going through the most tiresome phase of his life now. I would like to at least help him out a bit in this period."

Seeing how broad-minded and kind Jeremy-senpai was, the feeling to make a sword for this kind-hearted person filled up my heart. Well, correctly, I guess it is for his brother.

For these pure-hearted people, I feel like I should demonstrate the skills I have been polishing until now.

“I see, but, is it okay to ask me for such an important thing? There are probably more skilled craftsmen in the royal capital.”

“No, even from someone I trust quite a lot, I heard that the swords you build are very good. Well, it might be wrong for me to say this as I haven’t seen it myself but, if it is okay with you, could you please accept this job? I really want to see your completed sword too now.”

Taking a sip of the tea, I thought about it once again.

I have already made quite a lot of swords. But this would be the first time making it for a customer. This person would be my first customer, huh?

I feel like it would not be too bad as my first job.

“Very well. I accept this job.”

“I see, I am glad. Is it okay if I pay you later? Unfortunately, I do not have much money in hand right now.”

“Of course, that is okay.”

Shaking hands with each other, we concluded the negotiation.

I think this would be the best form of accepting jobs from clients and making them swords in the future.

To think I would get a customer even before opening up a shop.....

Jeremy-senpai gave me a deadline of one week,

If I have that much time, I can make it pretty good.

It is my important first job.

I should use the metal I have been keeping for a long time.

It is the metal taken from the best ore of Kudan. Being right in the middle of Kudan, that ore was in abundance and the country started mining it with a large amount of money.

It is called the Irumine ore.

The supply being high and the quality being good, it is the most used metal in Kudan.

Long ago, my teacher had told me something-

'The skill of a craftsman is best seen from the work he does with the Irumine metal.'

The one I have been always using for practice is not bad either. I can probably pour all of my skill into it.

After that day, except during classes, I had been holed up in my room making swords.

I had wasted the materials and rebuilt it many times.

However, I did not use more than what I would receive.

I aimed for 30% profit as I made it.

As I am aiming to do this professionally, it is only natural having this limitation on myself.

Using all of my skill, I built a sword, making it as equal and as straight as I could.

And at the end, I carved my name, Kururi Helan, on the body of the blade.

I made use of the advice I received from Rail.

As long as I am a craftsman, I should be selling my name.

After one week, Jeremy-senpai came by as promised.

As usual, he is a man of etiquette and tried to pay me before I even handed over the product.

That is the wrong order of doing it, so I apologized and brought the sword first.

I took it out from its sheath and showed it to him.

“There is no imbalance on the sides, the front, the breadth or the straight tempered line. I poured all of the skill I could into it.”

Senpai took the blade, brought it really close to his face and gazed at it.

“Excellent craftsmanship. It is glowing as if water is dropping on it. Also, I heard that swords with great balance feel really light to the hand. This is exactly that. As it is a present, I cannot try it out but I am extremely pleased with it.”

“Thank you very much.”

“No, I should be the one thanking you. You did well making something this good in a period of one week. With this, I can push my brother to gift it with confidence. Once again, you have my thanks.”

Leaving the payment, Jeremy-senpai left.

It looked like he wanted to send it to his brother as soon as possible. You can really see his good character from how happy he is for his brother as if it was his own.

And in this manner, I had properly dealt with my first official customer.

That night, I had relaxed too much and stayed in bed for long.

It feels like I have had quite the fatigue built up.

The deadline, expense, demanded skills and experience, and also the huge expectation from the customer.

I feel like I have done something completely different even though I have been making so many swords till now.

I might be advancing through quite a harder road than I had thought. But even still, if I were to ask for a future filled with happiness, I need to push my way through.

Thinking to myself that I would not waste my first payment, I had closed my eyes for the day.

And also, Jeremy-senpai's brother.... I hope his love life goes well too.....

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I ended up worsening my cold.

Falling ill after finishing my first job, I was sluggishly dragging on my bad condition.

Ahh, my throat hurts.

Going all the way to the dining hall to have breakfast feels like a pain. I do not want to work; I feel cold and tired.

Of course, it was during these times a customer would appear. There was a rhythmic knock on the door.

I dragged my heavy body over and opened the door.

“Ah, Eliza!”

My voice came out rough because of the sore throat but I could not help but get surprised. Eliza stood there embarrassed.

“You have not had breakfast yet, right? I brought it for you!”

Said Eliza and pushed a basket toward me which probably contained the breakfast.

It was covered with a handkerchief but that alone cannot possibly hide it from my sense of smell when I am starving.

There is a tomato dish inside. It is very fresh, so it is perfect for early morning.

I am honestly really happy she did this.

“Thanks. I was just feeling very hungry. You truly saved me there.”

“Fuun~, You are pretty sick, aren’t you? Pathetic.”

I felt like asking “Do you hate pathetic guys?” but my condition worsened even more, so I meekly decided to return to my bed.

“Would you... like to come in?”

“..... Hmm, I guess I will!”

I don’t know why she ended the sentence so intensely but I decided to let her in.

I guess she is probably curious about the smithy since she is looking around restlessly.

That cannot be helped, can it? Anyone would be interested. It is pitch black so, I guess a girl would not come to like it.

Well, you will soon get used to it, so please endure it for a while.

I did not even have the composure to serve her tea so I just told her to feel at home.

I got into my bed, pulled the table closer, and decided to have my breakfast there.

This is not good manner but it can not be helped at this point. I truly am in

pain after all.

Covering myself with the futon, I confirmed the contents of the basket.

Bread, soup, fried chicken and salad.

I am grateful; it is wonderful how the perfectly balanced the food is.

“Did you already have breakfast, Eliza?”

“Yes, I did at the dining hall. Ah, that tomato soup is really delicious!”

“Really?”

“Really!”

Looking a little embarrassed with getting worked up like that, Eliza turned her face away.

Certainly, just like Eliza said, the soup was really good.

“This warms up my body. I wanted some vegetables, so today’s menu is on point.”

“Yes, I guess so. But yesterday’s dinner was even more on point. I mean, it was potato-.....”

Eliza said up till that and stopped, smiled and pretended it never happened.

No, I actually heard it, you know. I heard you say potato.

I skipped yesterday's dinner so I do not know but it seems like there were quite a lot of potatoes.

Besides, I already know that Eliza loves potatoes.

I stretched my hand out into the salad and confirmed that there were potatoes inside. It was a potato salad.

“Would you like a bite?”

“..... No, thanks.”

Ah, she hesitated! She hesitated there! What was that pause!

Even though she already ate she hesitated just because it had potatoes in it!

Unmatched fondness of potatoes! Potato fetish!

Is your weight okay?! Well, you're quite slim so I guess it is okay, huh!

“Ah, chew properly when you eat.”

Eliza told me while I was rudely eating the potato.

Well, chewing properly is a good thing, so I went on to chew properly and finished the potato.

Yep, potatoes really are delicious. I did not quite realize it until now.

“Potatoes are pretty sweet, aren't they?”

“I know, right?! If you properly chew the potato, it releases its original sweetness!”

Having finished her sentence, Eliza realized that she was out of character and went back to smiling sweetly, pretending that did not happen as well.

Even though she clearly said all of that, she plans to gloss over it.

That smile which seems to be completely suppressing her face muscles, it really looks like she plans to completely cover up that just now. With force.

I think I should stop carelessly bringing up potatoes in front of her.

I also ate the bread and the main dish – the fried chicken. It looks like my appetite has returned considerably. Eating while being watched feels weird but maybe because I was concentrating too much on the food, I could even tell apart the intricate flavors. This might be a sign that I am slowly getting better.

When I tried to clean up after having finished eating, Eliza stopped me.

“I will do that. I also came to nurse you.”

And just as she said, she started cleaning it up.

To push such chores onto someone of high class as her, what a luxury.

I guess catching a cold every once in a while won’t be that bad.

Knock-knock.

That is the second time today someone knocked.

“Coming~”

Eliza said with a high tone and cheerfully walked towards the entrance.

Are you my wife?!

The ‘coming~’ just now is the wife’s ‘coming~’ isn’t it?!

Are you sure you are okay with that?! Eliza-san!

“Opening~”

I heard the sound of the door opening, and immediately closing.

Ehh?! Why?!

That is not how you greet visitors! That was too fast!

What happened? Who is here?

I am too curious to fall asleep here!

“Eh, Eliza. Why did you come back? Somebody came, right?”

“Hmm? Is that so?”

Uwah, what a barefaced lie. She put her index finger on her lips and slightly tilted her head. Ehh—that is the first time I am seeing such behaviour. I am sure that is not just some gesture you can naturally pull off like that.

The door was knocked once more.

As expected, someone did come.

I could feel Eliza getting somewhat irritated.

But still, she went to open the door, which was knocked once again.

“Oho? Do you need something?”

“Umm, I heard Kururi was sick so I brought breakfast for him but.... was I too late?”

“Yes, you were too late. Ohohoho, Kururi-sama has already had his breakfast!”

“Ahh, that is good. Is it okay if I come in too? I would like to check up on Kururi.”

“It is not!”

Why?!

Judging from the voice, I am sure it is Iris.

I can tell that she is perplexed by Eliza’s hostility.

I felt bad for Iris so I rose up once again and forced my way in between them.

“Thanks for coming, Iris. Come on in, you two. It is also warm inside.”

And so the both of them came in together.

I still can not really keep myself up much so I just told them to be comfortable, that there are snacks and tea so to help themselves.

“No, I just had breakfast so I am fine. More importantly, do you need something? I can make it for you.”

“No, Kururi-sama also does not need anything.”

For some reason, Eliza answered in my place. It is the truth, so is it possible that she possesses an unusual power of knowing what is going on in my mind? Well the chances of that being true are extremely low.

“Letting all these left over food to rot feels like a waste so I guess I will eat it. I feel like I might get fat if I eat it all though.”

Even while forcing a smile, Iris values food. As expected, when you see it from the common people’s perspective.

Eliza was watching Iris with side glances, not moving her head even a bit.

It was very obvious.

When Iris stretched her hand to the salad, Eliza reacted with a twitch.

“Nn? Eliza-san, do you want some salad?”

“There is no way someone of such a high status as mine would react to food!”

“That is true. I end up reacting if there is someone having my favourite dish beside me. As expected, nobles do not have that greedy nature, do they?”

“Teehehe” Iris laughed feeling a little embarrassed.

Please stop it at that! Eliza is also here! She is extremely reactive to potatoes!

“Ah, these potatoes are so delicious! They are using the good ones for today’s meal, huh?”

Iris also complemented the potatoes I thought were delicious.

Oh, so today’s ones were just genuinely better.

“Ye-yes, today’s ones are pretty good, aren’t they?”

The Eliza who I thought would keep being stubborn, also reacted to Iris’ words.

It looks like potato became the suspension bridge between them.

“Right? I really like potatoes. Well, in fact, I just love vegetables overall.”

“Yes, they are delicious, aren’t they?!”

She is trying to remain calm but you can feel her being happy from how she is ending her sentences.

It looks like the potato talk will sprout a bud. Potato sprouts are poisonous though, I wonder if it is okay.

“Actually, I have been wanting to talk to you for quite a while, Eliza-san. I am a commoner but, if you are okay, let’s be friends, Eliza-san.”

“I refuse! but, I guess I can talk a little...”

“Ah, I am glad! I am happy even if it is just that. Is it okay if I call you Eri?”

“No, it is not! well, for now, it is not..”

Eliza’s cheeks turned a little red. You are happy?!

You are happy being called Eri?!

Hmm? All things considered, Eri does sound cute. No, in fact, it sounds very cute!

“E-eri”

I said with a rough voice, caught up in the moment.

A strong slap to the face came back.

Ah, it hurts. Just a while back my forehead was hot but now my cheeks are burning.

Failed to take advantage of the situation.

“Hey, Eliza-san. Do you like potatoes?”

“Yes, I like vegetables as a whole as well.”

Uwaa, so ambiguous. Even though you like potatoes that much.

“If it’s okay with you, wanna come over to my field? It is about time to harvest the potatoes. They are one of our most fine products so I wanted to brag about it to someone.”

“..... Let’s go!”

The two of them happily left the room.

It is not what you would call a girlish hobby but if they are getting along then I guess it is fine.

Hmm? Eh, what about nursing me?!

Cough-cough! Wait, it looks like it is getting worse!

Hello!?

Immediately after, the door was knocked again.

Ah, I am glad. It looks like they remembered me half-way and came back.

I was so happy that I jumped out of the bed to welcome them.

“Welcome ba....”

Rail stood there holding a basket from which you could get the scent of the tomato soup.

“Yoo, I brought breakfast for you~”

“I don’t need it!”

I slammed the door shut.

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Botsuraku Youtei Nanode, Kajishokunin wo Mezasu

Vol. 4 Chapter 9

“Oh, will you be at it today?”

It is troubling if you say it like you are in a familiar pub or something....

At the dining hall, I met Jeremy-senpai who came with a job request the other day.

It has been quite a while since then... which reminds me, I did not get to ask how his brother's love life is going.

It would be nice if my sword was of some assistance to it.

“Yes, I will probably be at it.”

I replied assuming that he was asking about the smithing.

I guess it might be because he was with his classmates so he just left saying “Then I will pay a visit later tonight.”

He is a person of integrity, thus, just as the sun had sunk and it became darker, Jeremy-senpai came by.

He was wearing this grin and his cheeks were red.

Judging from the bad breath, he was probably drunk.

It is a taboo to have alcohol inside the school grounds but I guess there are loopholes once you become an upperclassman.

“Senpai, you have been drinking quite a bit, haven’t you?”

“Ehehe, you can tell? Today is special so let’s leave it at that.”

I really do not know what’s so special but, he does not seem to be the bothersome drunkard so he will probably not do anything.

“Alright~ I am coming in.”

I got him some cold water like he wanted.

He gulped it all down in one breath and immediately asked for one glass more.

Exactly how much did you drink today? Considering all that, he is quite stable on his feet.

“Ahh, I have been drinking from yesterday, you see. Today as well, started drinking from the noon.”

“Is that really okay? Won’t it be bad if the teachers find out?”

“Well the teachers will probably forgive for today. After all, my place of employment has been decided.”

Place of employment.....

I see, so Jeremy-senpai is in his final year.

They will be graduating soon, so I guess it is pretty normal for the talk of employment to come up in this season.

“I am, you know, more or less a noble, right? Well, it’s like the very edge of being a noble, you see. It’s like I am from a family which can barely be called nobles, you see, so there is nothing to take over from that family. But you see, as joyous as it is, I got a job at the royal capital. In fact, in the royal castle. Who knew I would be able to work with my brother, right? This is a joyous thing! How can I not drink?!”

“Oohhh, so that is how it is. Congratulations on getting the job!”

So that is why they are also allowing alcohol, huh? Though only for a limited time.

I guess this academy is quite broad-minded. I mean, they are letting me have a smithy here as well, after all....

“Haha~ thank you, thank you.”

Jeremy-senpai laughed with an amiable face.

He is a very sociable person, so I think he just wants to honestly celebrate.

“And so, about that matter. I immediately sent the sword to my brother after taking it from you. And good things just kept following. It seems like he is properly talking with the other party and that they liked the sword considerably. He wrote in the letter that ‘She was extremely happy to see the

dazzlingly well tempered sword. But to me, her beautiful, straightforward smile was so much more dazzling that it sliced off my soul in half.””

What is with that?

It is too embarrassing for me to listen, so please, you do not need to report it to me. I feel the drunken sickness even though I did not drink any alcohol.

It is about time your brother should come to his senses! I just hope he does not feel like dying in the future.

“I-is that so? I am glad it went well.”

“And then, you see, good things have happened to me as well. Several days after I sent the sword to my brother, I got the notice saying I got accepted to a high ranking job in the royal castle, you see! Since then, my days have just been full of drinking and celebrating.”

“I-I see.”

I do not yet know the appeal of alcohol so I cannot really understand his feelings. But I completely understood that he was pretty happy.

“And so, you see? That’s not the end of it.”

Thought so. He is still drunk so I got the feeling that he will not stop talking for quite a long time.

“You see, I was called to the royal castle to show my face after receiving the pass notice. I met many higher-ups there, but at the end, I met the super important person, the prime minister! Really, he seemed so dignified and majestic!”

The prime minister... Eliza’s papa, eh....

That dandy, really competent-looking man to whom everything is secondary to his wife... I don’t quite know what to think of him...

When I hear about him from others like this, I just end up thinking that “he’s a pretty amazing guy after all, huh”.

He probably holds quite the power. I hope he does not use it in a wrong way...

“In the castle, you see, there were many good-looking people. A lot of women

who looked like they will not pay any heed to me whatsoever, you see.”

“Jeremy-senpai, you are a pretty good person. If you keep working diligently, I am sure you will come across a great meeting.”

“Oh, really? You know your stuff, don’t ya?!”

Saying that, he patted me on the head. I really want him to stop but as he’s drunk so I guess it is alright for today.

“And you see, there’s even more.”

Yes, yes, please continue.

“So, you see, when I went to pay a visit to my brother, for some reason, I was surrounded by the Order of Knights. The Order of Knights is like that, you know, like you cannot be disillusioned by them. They just look cool because, you know, they gallantly ride horses wearing shining armor during an emergency. But generally, you know, they are potatoes. There were some even in my class, you see, they are just potatoes who are a bit good at brawls! But potatoes are pretty delicious, right? But you know, these potatoes are not. they are not like the soft and delicious potatoes. they are like potato bastard, okay?”

I wonder what he is talking about. He probably had something he wanted to say about getting surrounded by the Order of Knights but then the ‘Order of Knights are just potatoes’ came up and I cannot see where this is going.

“I was, you see, surrounded by these potatoes. These strong-muscled, smelling like sweat Order of Knight potatoes, you see. You know what they said to me? They said ‘you seem to be the one who prepared a sword for Madi. That sword which had Kururi Helan engraved in it.’ Madi? I was like ‘who in the world is that?’ you know? And then I remembered that it was the name of the woman my brother fell in love with. And then, you know, I thought ‘Ah, that sword.’. Then you see, they just drew really close to me, you know? ‘And they say to send them one as well! I surely thought they were going to congratulate me for getting a job but nope! They only think about themselves! What, you are not satisfied enough with just that muscle, huh?! Now you want an elegant sword as well, huh?! Potatoes shouldn’t be asking for butter!”

Potato butter, I see. Now there is the correct combination, Jeremy-senpai.

“And so you see, I told them right off, that ‘My buddy is the one making them. But he is quite the oddball so he won’t build you guys one that easily!’”

By oddball, do you mean me?! I am an oddball?!

Don’t tell me you were already drunk in the royal castle, Jeremy-senpai!

“And then, you see, they came desperately requesting me. That price was not a problem. So I summoned up my courage and told them, you see. I guess they would be surprised, wouldn’t they? Since I told them it is of the price same as half my annual salary. Kakkakkaka!”

“Half of your annual salary.....”

“Gulp”, I swallowed my saliva.

“And so, this is the money they entrusted to me!”

I really do not know where he had it hidden but Jeremy-senpai brought out a leather bag full of a large amount of money.

When I tried listening to it, the gold coins were self-asserting by jingling and jangling. ‘Goldy coin~ ufufufu~ I am a gold coin~’ like that. Well, not like I can actually hear those words exactly.

“Oo-ohhh?!”

“Total for 11 persons. I took as many as I could!”

“Ooohhhh!!”

Jeremy-senpai gave a nice, cool smile.

“This much?! No, I feel kinda bad. Please take some as commission.”

“No, I can’t take commission. More like, I don’t wanna. I got a good, stable job after all, you see”

Jeremy-senpai laughed loudly. As expected, he was still drunk.

“But still, please let me show my gratitude somehow. This much....”

Letting me earn this much, thank you very much! Seriously, my future

broadcast looks a lot brighter now! No, really!

“It’s fine, it’s fine. Now when I think about it, I wonder how I made you make a sword that good for a noble for such a small price. And also, your skills are really amazing. There aren’t many craftsmen who can build a sword like that, you know? You can’t sell your skills short. That’s why I took as much as I could. Even then, 11 of them requested it to be done. The customers have deemed your sword to be as worthy as that, you know?”

Ooohhh! Jeremy-senpai, you really look like a handsome hunk to me now!

Even though you look pretty plain, not like a noble and with a face which can be found pretty much everywhere, you look sparkling to me today!

“So you should be the one receiving this money. This is the justifiable amount for your swords.”

“Yes, I understand! This Kururi Helan will make swords equally good – no, even better than before for the 11 customers to prove that Jeremy-senpai’s eyes make no mistake!”

Before I realized, I was doing the gesture the Order of Knights do, putting their fists to their heart.

Making Jeremy-senpai say ‘Stop making that pose the sweaty potatoes do, you’re reminding me of them’.

I started working immediately.

I still have some materials. I should do as much as I can before the stock comes in. I will not have to send them altogether, after all.

I shall send them as I finish making them.

If they are waiting for it, then that way should be the best.

I thought the drunken Jeremy-senpai would go to sleep or return but it looked like he was staying.

“I want to see you work.” he said.

I am used to being watched. It is not a bother.

In fact, he is my first customer, and also the person who has really

acknowledged my skill. I want him to watch.

While I was striking the metal, Jeremy-senpai respectfully started talking to me.

“Can you talk while doing it?”

“Yes, at this stage, I can.”

“Ah, so there are times when you cannot. I will keep that in mind. What do you plan on doing in the future, Kururi? Will you come to the royal capital?”

Future, eh...

Succeeding over the Helan territory would be the best.

If I do that, I can lead a stable life too.... And I can also take Eliza, who fell into ruin, as wife too..? Well, not that it matters.... Well, I guess it kinda does. Not like I have any interest or anything....

Well, I guess succeeding the Helan territory would be the best.

Even if Eliza comes, I can assure her a satisfying life. It is okay if she does not come anyway. I am not really that interested...? not really....

“I am blessed with being part of a noble family in possession of a land so I will probably succeed that.”

“Is that so?! I completely thought you were like me since you were doing this job.... So, why smithing?”

I guess that is how it will come, huh? Very justified question.

I would ask the same thing too if I was in his place. In fact, to the level that I would become anxious if I did not ask. Ah, my behaviour is too odd. How should I explain it to him?

Hobby? That would be too weird.

Philosophy? What is with that even...

“Men who have an occupation are pretty cool, aren’t they?”

I decided to keep quiet about the ruin. I mean, it is not like it is already set in stone that I will fall to ruin. Eliza is pretty quiet too, and surprisingly her father is

also a pretty good man.

There are low chances of our house going under too.

Then I do not need to say it out myself.

“Well, I do understand what you mean. But it is quite different from what nobles’ hobbies are. Like I thought, you are an oddball. Well, not as if I don’t like that though.”

“Is that so? I also like Jeremy-senpai.”

“I really appreciate it. I was feeling a little anxious as there will many nobles with high status at the royal castle. I feel better now after talking with you. I thought that I would lay the foundation at the royal castle if you were also aiming to work there but I guess that was unnecessary, huh?”

You even thought that far for me?

Really, this guy is so kind. Well, I already knew that from his brother’s love matter.

“Moreover, you also have your smithy. If it suits you, you might be able to earn more that way.”

“Hahahaha.....,”

I am starting to feel like that wouldn’t be so bad in itself.

If the Helan hot springs die out, I guess I might try doing business as the blacksmith there.

Ah, nope, nope, our hot springs will be indestructible forever!

“Well then, I, this is my limit....”

“Ah, if it’s okay, please use the bed. I don’t feel like I will be sleeping today.”

Bleugh-bleuggheghghehggh

Ehhhh, by limit, you meant that limit?!!

Please, spare me!!

“So-sorry... ah...”

Bleugh-bleuggheghghehggh

“Don’t talk! Just don’t talk anymore!”

“But still, lastly, Kururi, just this....”

“Ah, it’okay. Don’t talk anymore. I understand!”

“I, with you....”

Bleugh-bleuggheghghehggh

“Uuwe....”

There he goes. Jeremy-senpai has left for the dream world.

Oi oi oi oi, who is going to clean up this vomit?! Huh?!!

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 10

By the time I had finished up one sword, I was completely covered in ash.

I am also in good form recently; I feel like I am in the zone.

And mostly only during these times.... someone always gets in the way.

“Sorry to be here so late at night, I am coming in.”

There we go.

I have grown accustomed to it by this point. Today, the prince comes in again like he owns the place.

“What-why are you making that face? If you want, I can go back, you know? If you really want it. Look, I am really going back? Are you okay with that?”

Ah, so bothersome.. so very bothersome.

I hope you get hated by Iris.

Of course, I did not say it out loud but I did shout it out in my heart.

“If you say it like that, I can’t turn you away, now can I? So, what did you need?”

“Today, you see, I brought some good stuff.”

Good stuff?

“There you go – making that happy face. What happened to that reluctant face just now? Really, I would like to put the two side by side and compare.”

“What good stuff?”

“You know, people who excessively want stuff are generally the ones who have some kind of fear. Like I thought, you are hiding something not good, aren’t you?”

He-he is sharp! Even though he is a piece of junk when it comes to love matters.

“O-of course not~ You handsome prince~ All hail the Kudan country!”

“What is with that blatant flattery? Well, if you did do something bad, you should say so early on. It would just get unnecessarily hard to deal with later. Now then, let’s return to the souvenir.”

“Let’s do that. Is it the black box you are holding in your right hand?”

The prince had a rectangular leather box in his hand.

Something good is inside it. I can smell it. My nose knows.

“That’s right. You’ve been quite bothersome saying ‘reward, reward’ from quite a while back so I specially got this supplied. Even among the royalty or nobles, only a limited number of people can eat th-What? What is with that clearly unpleasant face?”

It appears that the prince is excelling at reading my expressions lately.

And in fact, I was indeed disappointed.

Food, eh?

The reward from the royal family is food, eh?

I am not a kid!

If you finish eating that, it will be the end of it!

Surely there were other things in the royal castle! Vase! Vases are preferable. Even better if it’s a painting.

Haa-, it looks like the childish prince is not well-informed in that aspect.

“You don’t understand, do you? You have been saying for a while, haven’t you? That something which will be worth a lot in the distant future would be nice.”

“Nn? I am amazed you remember it. If that is the case, then why food?”

“Even though it is food, it is quite amazing. Never mind that, I will just show it to you first.”

The prince carefully opened up the black box using both his hands.

And in the inside... Uwaah, it stinks!!

This, what is this, it stinks so much!

“What do you think? Isn’t it amazing?”

“Amazing! Amazingly stinky!”

Inside the box, there was light brown colored round spherical object.

It was all dry and wrinkled up. And it was emitting an intense smell similar to a rotten fish.

Wait a minute, this.....

“Prince, it is just us here so I won’t try to dress my words but...”

“Nn?”

“This.. this is poop, isn’t it?”

“It is not poop!”

“No, no, no, it’s poop no matter how you look at it! From the smell to the looks! Who are you trying to deceive, putting it in a high-class box?! Poop is just poop!”

“Ahh what a rude guy. You want me to take it back? I will take it back, you know? I will really take it back?”

Ahh! That way of talking is unfair! Unfair!

I guess I have no choice but to ask for the full explanation now.

“Then, what is this?”

“It’s an eyeball.”

“Eyeball?”

“Yep. Moreover, an eyeball of an ancient dragon. If you boil this and drink it, they say you can get quite high.”

“Quite high, you say... what is this dangerous smell it has been giving off for all this time then?!”

Like white powder-ish? I will pass.

“To be honest, I don’t really know much about it. But it’s of high value, there’s

no doubt about that. I went through quite the trouble to get a hold of this, you know? It's worth will probably not drop either. Also, it won't rot anymore. I mean, it is already pretty rotten, I guess...."

"Mmm, I will give to my father so I guess I will accept it."

"Oi oi, it really is worth a really high price, you know? Well, what you do with it is up to you though."

I do not really want to store this dirty thing.

It's best to give these stuff to him.

I am sure he will gratefully accept and immediately eat it if I say it is from the prince.

"Actually, I also came for another matter today."

"What is it? Is it a loan? That's okay with me."

"That's not it! It's that, that thing. Ahh-what was it again? I forgot. This is all your fault, you know?"

"I am pretty sure it is a loan. It's okay, you don't need to feel shy. What is it? Are you gambling or something? What a troublesome person."

"That's not it! Ah, yes. I remember. You're storing a large quantity of swords, aren't you? The self-made ones."

"Yes, they are in that room."

"I know. Let me have a look."

I was wondering what it could be but, he just wanted to see my swords which he had already seen before.

I wonder what brought this on... Is he going to buy some? I would really like him to buy some off of me.

Rustling sounds could be heard from the next room for a while. I wonder what he is doing... From the sound of things, he is probably looking for something in that pile of swords.

But still, we are talking about that prince here. I should also bear in mind that he might not be doing something good.

The door opened and the prince came back.

He was holding three swords with both of his hands.

“I have been thinking for a while now but... on contrary to the curves of swords the normal producer makes, as hard as it is for me to say.... your ones are beautiful.”

“Eh?”

What did you say just now? Beautiful?

“And also, their functionality is exceedingly well too. They are light, sturdy, and the balance is also great. Hmm, as I thought, you have good skills.”

What is this all of a sudden? It-it’s not like I will come to like you if you compliment me that much, okay?!

This is bad, I was just thinking like a maiden.

Do not get shaken by the prince’s compliments, me!

He will think of me as an easy woman then! Ah-this is bad. My heart is going complete maiden mode.

“What would an amateur know of it-da ge!”

Ah. I ended up spouting something incomprehensible at the end with a bitter voice.

For me to do such a thing... can’t I hide my embarrassment in a better way?!

“Ah, sorry. I should have been careful when talking about those delicate things about a craftsmen.”

What is this? What is with the prince today?!

Bringing a present, complimenting me, and being awfully honest!

Death flag?! Are you going to die? After this? Please, take care of yourself!

“I will be taking these three.”

Ah, so you will be taking them. Can’t you say something like ‘Say the price, I

will take it!' there?

Well, I do not really mind either way. Take it, they were lying there anyway.

"That is fine with me but, where will you be going with all three?"

"Aah, I will be giving them as a present to a person. I have received quite a bit of assistance from them, you see."

"Assistance, eh?"

"That person does not like things of high value. But on the other hand, I also do not want to harm their dignity by sending the stuff going around in the city. And so, after thinking about it a bit, I remembered about the swords you had made. I thought to myself, 'Ah, those were quite pretty'. I felt like that so I came to look today and as I had thought, all of them are great. I have not been looking properly up till now but, it seems like your skills are the real deal. If I send this, it won't be a shame and it is also not one of those things going around in the city."

Ah, the prince is probably going to be the guy who dies after this. He just set up the death flag. He just became too nice of a guy.

And I will probably become the guy who regrets and cries a lot after he dies. Yep, it must be that. Definitely.

"The person you are sending it to, are they important to you?"

"Ah, when I was a child, I met them when I snuck out of the castle. They liberated me from the illness, you see. I was also taught many other things by them. Me, being here like this, is also because of that person. Truly, a wonderful person."

"That means... they are really important to you, aren't they?!"

"Of course. They are like family to me."

To think the prince also had a pure side. No, this person has been pure from the beginning.

I wonder what kind of a person they are.

They probably straightened up the prince when he was a cheeky brat. A

muscular older brother? Or perhaps like another mother? Either is fine, I guess.

“Why 3 then?”

“Well, of course it’s that. One for self-defence, one for admiration and one for preservation.”

What kind of a otaku are they?

“Haa-I guess I have no choice. Please take two with you. I will devote myself into making a perfect sword for self-defence now so please come and take it tomorrow.”

“Nn? Why? Why are you bothering yourself so much about it”

“It won’t do if they end up getting hurt because of my sword. I at least want them to use a sword I have confidence in for self-defence. Also, this might be some sort of fate. If you are going to choose one of my swords, I cannot go about it with half-baked measures. It is okay. It will be done by tomorrow night so please come and collect it.”

The prince murmured “I see.” and also said something afterwards which I could not make out.

He put down a sword, and looked back at me just as he was leaving and said, “I, somehow, feel like if it is this you, we could be friends for life. You.... you won’t die after this now, right?”

That is my line!!

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 11

The prince had been visiting my room quite a lot recently but, rarely enough, this time he brought something good with him.

“Here, this is for you.”

He said while handing me over a letter from Rahsa.

Rahsa, the second prince, is a lovely younger brother, unlike his impudent, elder brother.

He yearns to be like me. Ah, how sweet.

I eagerly opened the letter while recalling my memories of him.

It was not a letter for some particularly urgent need.

As we had not met for quite a while, he wrote his greetings and asked about how things were going.

Letters are originally like that so it was actually wrong on my part to think otherwise.

However, there were still three points I was curious about.

‘We have not met for a long time so I feel kinda lonely.’ was the number one point.

Too cute!

Too lovely!

I doubt there are other young kids like him who are this pure-hearted.

Rahsa is probably the only one who thinks of me this much.

I am so profoundly attached to him that I think he is probably the only one who thinks of me this much.

I should also send my thought, that I miss him too. Pipippipi!! I wonder if it reached him.

And the second point was 'Aniki, the swords you made became really popular in the royal castle.'

This, this is probably because of that.

The one I made for Jeremy-senpai.

Since Jeremy-senpai praised it that much, I had known that it was valued quite highly.

After that, 11 additional requests of production came through Jeremy-senpai, which have already been delivered by this time. It seems like those swords are receiving a lot of love from their users.

To the point of being really popular in the royal castle.

Ah, reading this makes me feel proud.

Moreover, it gives me the confidence that I can really keep on going on this path.

It also seems like my name is getting a little more well-known, so at this rate, in a few years..... fufufuffu.

Stopping my tanuki-like over-optimistic calculations, I shifted my attention towards the final point.

'Aniki, if it's okay, won't you come over to the royal capital during the winter break? You could stay at our house while you're here.' this final line.

At a glance, it looks like a pretty frank invitation like 'Let's hangout at our house!'.

However, that house, your house, are you aware that it is the royal castle, Prince Rahsa?!

No one goes to the capital with '*I guess I will stay over at the royal castle.*' in mind!

I have been to the royal capital a few times before.

Needless to say, it is quite a nice place.

There is a different charm to it than Helan, where nature is beautiful.

The royal capital, where old, long buildings are lined up.

That has its own beauty of what the humans have built up till now.

Still, I have not been inside the royal castle once.

My father has gone a few times before and I heard about his impressions of it.

'Nnn, the castle was huge, and there were a lot of knights, and my stomach was hurting a lot.'

It was like a impression a pre-schooler would have.

The royal castle is, in other words, a place majestic enough for the royal family to live in. Moreover, there would be a ton of sturdy looking soldiers protecting the royal family.

Yep, really does not feel like one could relax at a place like that.

Worst-case scenario, I might also end up with a aching stomach and live to speak of the same impression.

Nevertheless, it is still an invitation from Rahsa.

How would it look like if I just flat out reject?

Rahsa came to the Helan territory before, didn't he?

And yet me not going to the royal castle at all won't be good.

And I also do want to meet Rahsa.

Mm, and so, I decided to go!

But, there is still time left till the winter break.

When winter break ends, we will also be second years.

At the end of school year, there is also that test which would affect which class we fall into.

I would be quite busy during that time.

So I decided to prepare for my trip to the capital after I am done with all that.

They say snow piles up quite a bit in the royal capital so we could also play with the snow.

There are also a lot of large shops so shopping there would be fun as well.

There will be many pretty woman too so there's no doubt it will be a treat for the eyes.

Before I realized, I was going wild with my imaginations of fully enjoying the royal capital.

What-Could it be that I was actually looking quite forward to it?

Similar to the summer vacation, I was curious about what that person was planning to do.

So I caught her during the class break.

“Iris, do you have something planned for winter vacation?”

“I have not yet decided but I was invited to a place so...”

“Don’t tell me, from the prince?”

“He was asking me if I wanted to go to the capital. I did plan on refusing but he is being kinda stubborn.” Iris said with a bitter smile.

She is probably trying to properly decline him without hurting his feelings. I can feel her hardships.

“Actually, about that, will you reconsider? I was also thinking of going to the royal capital.”

“Is that so?! But still, I think I will pass. I had fun in Helan during summer but for a bumpkin like me to go to the capital..”

“But, you know, prince Rahsa also wants to meet. And besides, I am a bumpkin as well.”

“But there’s a world of difference between a commoner like me and a noble like you. Even though we are both from the countrysides, you’re like the leading edge of the country side, you know?”

Leading edge?!

What is with that really mysteriously cool title?!

“There are no levels of being from the countryside. And also, this might be a good opportunity to get rid of our bumpkin-ness. You have been officially invited by the prince too, so there will be no problem. Let’s go!”

“Ahh, if you invite me like that, so full of spirit, it is hard for me to refuse. It would be easier if I was called as a worker or something like the time in Helan territory.”

“Ah, I see.”

That is true. That way, it might be more comfortable for Iris.

To work in the long-awaited vacation, it feels absurd to me.

“Then, let’s try discussing with the prince. Or we could also ask Rahsa.”

“Hmm, if it’s like that then I will consider it.”

“I will go catch the prince. Wait for the result.”

And so I went to persuade the prince.

“Prince! Give me a job!”

“What is this, out of the blue?”

I caught the prince while he was having his lunch, looking somewhat unhappy.

And beside him sat Rail, with a refreshing face in contrast with the prince's.

“Prince, it seems you have invited Iris to the capital for winter vacation.”

“Fuunn, did you come to laugh at me?”

“No, not at all. I came to give you some advice.”

“Advice? You can't be trusted. Don't you also think so, Rail?”

“I think at least listening to him would not be bad. In fact, he did get Iris to go over to Helan during summer vacation.”

“Kuuuh...”

Rail precisely hits the prince where it hurts.

Which reminds me, the prince was rejected in summer too.

“Prince, Iris feels a huge burden when you invite her as a guest.”

“.....Continue.”

“As I was saying, you could just invite her as a helping hand in the castle. Leaving the miscellaneous matters to her would be best. She can do those perfectly.”

“Nope. I should prepare a job worthy of Iris. I can’t make her do chores.”

“What would that job be?”

“Hmmm, I guess I will prepare a post in the government or something...”

You blockhead!!

Give that job to me!!

“Nn, ahem, that’s out of the question. Even inviting her as a guest would be better than that. Right, Rail?”

“You’re asking me? Well, I do roughly agree.”

“Impossible! You fools.. you want me to make Iris do the cleaning of the castle or something?!”

“Yes. Iris wishes for it so that would be pretty good.”

“..... impossible!”

“And besides, stationing Iris near the King’s room might bring about an unforeseen chemical reaction like-

‘Hmm? Who is that beautiful young lady over there?’

‘Ah, that’s the temporary cleaning person here just for the winter.’

'I see. Hoh hoh hoh, she is working so hard being so young. Now that I look closely, her face is very beautiful as well. Ah, I know! I should make her marry my son!'

'Ohh, that is a wonder idea! I will prepare for it immediately!'

And like that, there might be a conversation between the king and some mysterious, old man."

"My father does not talk like that. And also, not some mysterious, old man. There is an old man. As if it would go so smoothly!"

Even though he says that, he is probably having quite the delusion now. It is written all over his face.

Even though he is quite smart, he becomes an idiot and takes things pretty seriously when it comes to love.

Just like they say, love is blind.

"Even still, I do agree with you a little there."

No, no, no, no, I do not! Even though I was the one who said it but, there is no way a miracle like that is happening!

"I see, hmm, I see, I see. If that's so then I guess I will make the arrangements. Then it's that – it's settled. Let's do that. I will hire Iris as the temporary cleaner! Kururi, pass it onto her!"

Agree with me a little?

It sure feels like you whole heartedly agree with me though.

The prince left the dining hall, laughing in a lively mood.

He is the type of person who would always laugh while leaving when they are in a good mood.

“Will you be going to the capital for winter break as well, Kururi-kun?”

“Ah, yes. I was invited by Rahsa.”

“I see. It looks like winter vacation won’t be so boring then.”

After saying something suggestively meaningful, Rail followed the prince out of the dining hall.

Well, most of the time when Rail says something meaningful, it actually does not mean anything.

Anyway, with this, I feel like I could bring Iris to the capital.

Besides that, I guess I will also invite Toto.

Although he probably won’t go.

I found Toto riding around the field on the dog, Gorou.

Gorou being a large-breed dog and Toto having a small build, it somehow works out.

Leaving that aside, it looked like they were getting along well.

“Toto, it looks like you’re having quite fun.”

“Yep, I don’t know if he got a hunch that Iris will be gone for a while or not

but, he came snuggling up to me.”

Clever! You’re too clever, Gorou!

“Well, when he comes up to snuggle like this, he feels surprisingly cute too.”

Skilled! You’re too skilled at making up to people, Gorou!

“Well, winter break is coming up, right? So, I will be going to the capital. Would you like to come along?”

“Ah, no. I will pass. And besides, Gorou is like this as well. He will probably start chasing me around after Iris comes back so I was thinking of passing time with him while he’s being cute.”

Perceptive! You’re really perceptive, Toto-san!

“I-I see. Well, since you are here, Iris can go to the capital in relief too.”

“Yep, have fun. Also, I don’t need souvenirs like the ones you brought last time, okay?”

Last time?!

Ah, that. Hot spring water.

I had thought it had reached the perfect point but since it led to diarrhea so....

But I still don’t want to stop challenging!

“You can look forward to the souvenirs~”

“Are you even listening to me?! I said I don’t need souvenirs like last time!”

“You can look forward to it~”

“You’re not listening to me, are you?! You’re definitely not listening!”

I found a goal for the trip.

Also got a travelling partner, Iris.

And so, that just leaves finishing up on school stuff.

I managed to catch up on my studies before the test.

My preparations for the journey are perfect, and my preparation for the test is also close to perfect.

I am looking forward to the results.

End of term test ranking:

1. Arch Kudan
2. Eliza Deauville
3. Iris Palala

As expected of the strongest three.

The iron wall couldn’t be destroyed.

But still, I should have done pretty good myself.

I looked for my name with confidence.

.

7. Kururi Helan

8. Rail Rein

I did it! I am above that guy!

Above that cool-type Rail.

I finally won!

With this, I can stay in the 'A' class next year as well.

And I can also enter winter vacation mode feeling good.

And behind me, Eliza was being tossed into the air in celebration as she won against her arch enemy.

Seeing that high-class, graceful Eliza in the air was immensely pleasant.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 12

The royal capital! The royal castle! Viva capital!

Somehow or the other, I was actually getting quite excited about the trip to capital.

Being relieved from the year-end exam played a big role.

It was cheerful inside the carriage.

While slurping the grape wine I got on the way, I was enjoying the scenery from inside the carriage.

I feel like I am getting used to trips.

“You look like you’re having quite the fun.” said Iris, who was also on the carriage.

From the looks of it, she seems to be in a good mood as well. Although she refused the grape wine.

“Yep. It kinda felt like a drag before but, after we actually set out, I have started to feel more excited.”

Yep, I am pretty excited!

“I think I also feel kinda the same. Which reminds me, your year-end exam results were pretty good, weren’t they?”

Well, being complimented by Iris, who stood third, feels a bit awkward...

“Really? Thanks. But yours were even more amazing.”

“Well, since I am always studying, I guess. But I ended up thinking ‘*When does he actually study?*’, you know. Even towards Arch prince and Rail-san too.”

Certainly, when do they actually study?

I guess they are what you call ‘*high-spec people*’. That’s irritating. Ah, so irritating.

Speaking of those two, they had already set out for capital on a different carriage.

They were going quite early because of the prince's orders.

He probably needs to make some arrangements as Iris is going. Like hiding his erotic books, or hiding his erotic likes or hiding his erotic shop points.

You're doing quite a lot of hiding there, aren't you, prince?!

"The prince and the others were in quite the hurry, weren't they? I wonder why they were in such a rush."

"Well, there are things men need to do, you see. Don't go too deep into this, okay?"

"Is that so? I will bear that in mind."

I do not know what kind of person Iris thought the prince to be but I am sorry if I accidentally embedded an odd image of you in Iris, prince!

"Once we reach there, what shall we do?"

"I think I want to do some work."

The prince already gave his consent to hire Iris. She was quite happy when she heard about it.

She was happily skipping about saying '*Incidental income~! Yay!*'.

Even though she just murmured '*Whew, I am glad.*' after hearing about her results.

That's a 180 degree difference in values with Eliza who was floating in the air after winning against Iris on the test.

That cheerful Eliza..... I think that is not a bad sign. At the very least, I like this side of her more.

"I-is that so? But it's not like your work will start immediately so I think we might have some time to kill."

"No, if we have more time then..... Ah, I know! Let's do that."

"Which is what?"

"That, you know, that. Hunting monsters!"

You really just want to work, don't you?! Or rather, it is the only thing you want to do!

It's the royal capital, you know?! And we are in a vacation! – well, at least that is what I think of it.

And you say monster hunting?! That is dangerous, you know!

We might get injured, you know!?

It hurts when I bleed, you know!

"And why such a thing...?"

"When I am riding a carriage like this with you, I just end up remembering that refreshing feeling when we first met."

The refreshing feeling when we first met?

Am I being complimented? I am being complimented, aren't I!?

"That large amount of money I got when I saved you and the merchant. Ahh, that is an unforgettable memory...."

Money!?

So you were talking about the refreshing feeling you got from earning?!

"Well, I guess that certainly is a good deal..."

"Yep, that helps the people and I can also make the best use of the things I learnt in school. Moreover, the pay is good too!"

"Where people gather, monsters gather too. And so wasn't there a special job for monster hunting in the capital or something?"

"Yes! And also, you don't need any prerequisites. Someone like me can also participate. I've been thinking for quite a while now, that that is the only good part of the capital."

"Only that?! All the bumpkins around the country yearn for the capital though!"

"Really? I guess they would want to hunt the monsters, huh? It is a good

source of income after all.”

No, you are wrong!

They yearn for the glorious image of the capital!!

“I see everyone wants to come to the capital. Then, all the more, I, who have been given this opportunity, shall make the most of it!”

“As expected of you, Iris. Really, you are very strong.”

Making her ears twitch, she looked outside with a side glance.

Wow, you can make your ears move by themselves. I was shown a very special skill.

I don’t know why she was moving her ears but, most of the time Iris averts her gaze to the side are the times when she has a request.

At these times, I need to just shut up and wait for her to speak.

It is probably not that big of a request anyway. But Iris ends up thinking of stuff too seriously so it’s worth following up on her there.

“You see, I am embarrassed of this but, I calculate stuff a lot.”

“Hoho.”

“Even monster hunting, you know, I wouldn’t do it if I were alone. I am scared when I think about the risk and what not. But, now, you know? You’re here too so...”

“Alright! Let’s go!”

“Eh, eehh?!”

It seems Iris did rely on me.

Reconfirming that in itself is good enough.

When I am having trouble in the future, I will be counting on you!

“Well, you are first-class in both magic and sword skills after all so, we could hunt safely if we are together. Sorry, you can refuse if you don’t want to.”

“The first-class magic and sword user Kururi shall accompany you!”

“He is saying it himself! Eh! Is this something you say yourself?!”

Who cares if there are tons of monsters!

Who cares if it’s dangerous!

It will be a nice present for the royal castle!

“Iris, do you know the detailed way to do it?”

“Yes, of course. Except to hunt the monsters for which there are wanted posters, basically you go as a mob.”

“Oh, so there are mobs.”

“Yep, mobs use their numbers to their advantage and do the job. And that being the case, it is much more safer. If you want to earn some quick money, then the mob is the way to go.”

You were expecting this, weren’t you? You have been planning this in your head for quite a while, haven’t you?

I mean, look at how smoothly she is going on about it.

“Then, let’s do that. Also, let’s delay our entry to the castle by a day. Our actions might be limited in castle. Especially monster hunting sounds just the stuff the higher ups would get angry about.”

“Yep, let’s do that. I wonder if the carriage will reach the capital by night?”

“Yep, probably around that time. We might also reach faster. Well, it will probably be some time between evening and night.”

“Then let’s go to an inn tonight.”

“I guess we will have to. Alright then, let’s go to the best inn we can find! Fufuu, I got money, if anything.” I am the newly, rich feudal lord’s son after all!

Let’s have a bonfire with all the notes!

Sorry, I actually cannot really afford to do that. It would be too wasteful.

“I knew you would say that! But nope! We will be staying at a cheap inn

today. And I will pay for it.

“Why?!”

“First! I will be having you accompany me tomorrow for my convenience so, I will pay. Actually, I have been saving up little by little.”

“Oho. Continue, continue.”

“Second! If we stay at a luxurious inn, it will be putting cart the before the horse! If I let you do that, we will probably be spending more than we earn tomorrow. If that’s the case, entering the castle quick would be better, right?”

“I guess that makes sense.”

“Third! This is all for my convenience but, I have caused you a ton of trouble till now too so let me pay this time!”

“Ooohh!”

“That is all! I am open to objections.”

“None! Then it’s settled!”

As expected, Iris also looks to be in really good condition.

I will be making her owe me more and more like this!

Closing her eyes once, taking a deep breath, and then opening her eyes again, Iris looked at me and said, “Thanks. Then keep me company a little longer.”

“Don’t say little, say in the future as well!”

Mainly for my sake.

“Well then, your bed is that one, okay?”

“Yes?! Eh, ehhh?!”

I was perplexed. Of course, I would be perplexed.

Why you ask?! Well that much is obvious!

By the time we reached the capital, it was already midnight so we decided on picking an inn at once.

Iris chose the inn and did all the paper works by herself.

When she said 'Let's go', I forgot that I had not received the key to my room.

Before I realized, I was guided into the room by Iris.

..... Into the same room.

Two of us, in one room, spending the night.

Me, at the back and Iris, at the front of the room.

'Ahh, good thing I am in the back, cause I am really scared of earthquakes!'- of course, I wasn't thinking of something as trivial as that.

Really.

Are you okay with this?! Are you really okay with this, Iris-san?!

You, you might be the future princess, you know!

In the same room with someone of unknown origin..... well, I guess you know my origin.

No, but, are you okay with this?!

We had slept close by before but, under the same roof, in a single room?!

Is this okay?!

"Umm, I see we're in the same room."

"Yep, as expected different rooms would cost a lot. Sorry~"

"No, it's not like I want you to apologize or anything. Really. But, is it okay? You know, you know, you know, you know?"

"I am fine but, are you not? If you really are then we could change rooms. "

Iris said with a really sad face.

I didn't mean to make her sad.

But, ultimately, it looks like it would make her sad.

"It-it's not like I am against it or anything! Go-good job!"

"Really? Good job, huh? I guess I did a good job, ehehe"

"Ahahaha... say, are you hungry?"

"Yep, I am starving."

"Then, let's go have something."

We had a dispute about who will pay for it. I won the dispute. We're in the capital after all, let's have something good.

So I looked for a plain but good looking restaurant.

That was our compromise plan.

In the end, we just entered a diner which had scent around it. The diner was pretty nice; It was a bit expensive but, I won the dispute again.

And for the taste, it was delicious. Yep, very delicious.

But I couldn't somewhat focus on eating.

I couldn't help but feel anxious about sleeping in the same room after this.

It's not the '*cherry-like anxiousness*'

'*Cherry-like anxiousness*' is the anxiousness behind which you feel great happiness; It is actually the best kind of happy anxiousness in the world, kind of. Maybe.

However!

But the one I was feeling now was certainly not that.

What will I do if something happens?

I will probably have to duel with the prince or something.

And to Eliza, I guess apology?

Hmm, apology? Feels kinda different. Our relationship isn't even like that.

But since I did feel like apologizing because of that, do I actually have that wish?

I don't know! But what I do know is that, I will have to be in my senses tonight!

"You have a really good appetite, sir! We have a lot of garlic bread in stock

today so shall I serve it? It will give you stamina!"

"I don't need stamina!"

Darn it, these waiters! What are you trying to push on me?!

Keep your service mind to a level! But I do hope you guys prosper!

"Mmm, is that so? Ah, then, for you specially, I shall serve the dried poisonous insect insides! If you eat it after a meal, your stamina will increase!"

"Like I said, it is okay! I don't need stamina!"

Darn it, these waiters! Burning with unnecessary service spirit!

But service spirit is important! I hope you prosper!

This is bad, when I take the conversation that way, I end up thinking of stuff.

I should drink some soup and calm down.

Mmm, this soup has a great taste.

"Ohh, that soup is made by crushing the liver of an animal to provide a distinct taste! It will give you good stamina!"

You waiters!!!

You have already done your service, I see! You shall prosper!

It is getting crowded really quick, after all!

Iris was also gulping down the soup.

Is that okay....

After eating, we decided to take a walk per my suggestion.

It was to calm myself.

"Night in the capital is pretty bright, isn't it? This is still just the edge of the capital but it's still so lively with all the people."

"Yep, it really feels like a city."

"I feel good after taking a walk. I will probably have a good sleep today."

Good sleep?!

Ah, no.

I feel like my head's rudder is pointing at a weird direction.

After walking a bit, Iris suggested whether we should go back or not so we decided to head back.

Step by step, the inn draws closer.

And then, we arrived in front of the inn.

"Ah, Iris. I will come in after smoking one."

"Eh, you smoke?!"

"Ah, no, no. I will go hook up there or something, so you go ahead."

"Ehh?! Since when?!"

"That, is not it. I will be doing some muscle training so, you can go back ahead."

"Muscle training?! What happened? Did you want to walk a bit longer? But it's getting late, you know."

"..... Yes, let's get in.. shall we?"

Tomorrow, we hunt monsters.

I need to rest my body today but my head is just filled with weird thoughts.

When I entered the room, Iris had already got into bed in her pajamas.

I will be too embarrassed to sleep without my shirt here! I guess beautiful people are like that, huh? Looking smooth even when they sweat.

It isn't like I am curious or anything but.... or rather I am actually very curious. Eh, am I actually pretty maiden-like?

While I was getting worked up with all that in my head alone, I could hear Iris' sleeping breath from the next bed already.

She had fallen asleep before I realized.

When I saw that peaceful face, my stupid thoughts also disappeared.

I should also sleep. It feels like we need to be up quick early too.

After that, I also fell asleep.

I received 5 punches to the stomach by Eliza in my dreams. That is probably my unconscious mind at work.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 13

“Hey, I don’t really know if I should be telling you this but..... I saw a really interesting dream last night, you see, and I just really want to talk about it.”

Iris said after putting on air, while we were having breakfast together.

What on earth could it be?

Seeing how she is hesitating to tell me about it, it might be a funny dream about the prince. If so, then I would love to hear it!

“Feel free to talk. And besides, I am the only one listening here.”

“Right. I guess I will tell you then. I saw a dream where Eliza-san was punching you in the stomach yesterday. Ehehe, that, that was so funny.”

Ehh?! That dream is the same one I saw though?!

Is it a dream which will come true?! Will it?! Hey?!

“Seeing that graceful, noble Eliza, punching you in the stomach. Seeing two of you like that was just, so funny. Even after waking up in the morning, that scene just stayed in my mind.”

It’s not funny for me!!

How many punches was it?! It was just five in my dream!

“Haha.. hahaha... that is funny. Do speak of your dreams next time too. I really want to hear more.”

“Really? Ah, I am glad. I thought you might get angry as I saw a dream sulling you two’s brilliant image.”

Brilliant image? There is no such thing. In fact, I would say the image you saw in your dream would be more closer to reality.

Leaving aside Iris’ weird dream, I am glad she could relax.

If she was stiff and nervous, we wouldn’t be able to hunt monsters. On the contrary, we would be the ones being hunted.

“Let’s properly have our breakfast so that we don’t get worn out while hunting.”

“You are right. After laughing it off, I kinda feel a little hungry now.”

It seems she found it quite funny. Is me being punched by Eliza that amusing?

“Let’s go to the public office after breakfast. We need to check the price for a mob.”

“I will leave all that to you then.”

“Yep, leave it to me. If the capital wants a monster hunted, the mob price rate

becomes pretty good for it. If we just bring that monster's gem as proof, we will get the reward."

Really, she is so well-informed.

"I feel a little more at ease seeing I don't need to think too deeply of it."

"Yep. Leave all the arrangements to me. We will be fine if you just keep killing the monsters."

I am happy that she has faith in me but it also feels like she is kinda overestimating....

"Iris, are our weapons only swords?"

"That's the plan, what about it?"

"If it's okay with you, carry a sword I made. It has gotten quite the fame so I doubt it will break easily. If we're going to do this with only swords, I want you to use those."

"But the swords you made are professional... for me to use it.."

"It's fine, it's fine. It will also be a good test for its durability so please, use it."

"....Alright then, I will take good care of it."

After finishing breakfast, we tidied up our luggage and entrusted it to the inn. By paying an extra fee, we can leave it to them for a while.

After choosing swords and some stuff we might need from there, I handed one sword over to Iris.

“This?! I will use it!?”

Iris said while staring at the sword with her eyes wide open.

“I cannot. This is the kind of sword merchants hide in the back of their stores. The kind nobles keep in their residence. The kinds which come up in children’s fairy-tales!”

It’s not that good. Although I am happy hearing it.

I built that one similar to the one I built for Jeremy-senpai.

But as I was using the leftover ingredients for this one, when they ran out, I had to mix other various types of metal for it.

As I made it with light materials, it will be less durable compared to the one I gave Jeremy-senpai but it will 2 times more lighter.

“It’s fine. Let’s go with that today. I guarantee it won’t break throughout the day so don’t hold back your swings.”

“I can’t not hold back! Awawawa, what will I do if it breaks? I can’t pay back in my whole lifetime.”

‘It’s okay, you are the type of person who can!’ -can’t really say that, now can I?

After that, Iris felt like she carried a heavy responsibility in her heart but, when she actually drew the sword, she immediately got drawn to its charm.

She was fascinated by the light, water-like sword. Her eyes were quite wide open and she was blankly staring at it, so even I could feel it.

“This, this is definitely amazing! I am not very well-informed in this field but, even an amateur would understand! Uwaa, I want to become an adult capable of buying swords like this.”

That’s okay. If we keep on going on like that, you will be able to become an adult able to buy as many of these as you want.

You can buy it if you really like it that much. By paying later.

The one I handed over to Iris was a long, speed type sword.

And I took one which wasn’t even half as long.

It’s body is fat so, it’s weight would be the same as Iris’ one. It’s a sword balanced in both offense and defence.

Actually, I also find the longer ones easy to use but unfortunately, I don’t have one at the moment.

I didn’t want to increase my luggage that much so this was all I brought.

I was planning on mainly using magic either way so it would have been fine anyway.

We came in front of the public office. Even though it is called the *public office*, most of the people who come here are monster hunters so it got the nickname of *monster hunt office*.

There were strong-muscled men at every one of the building's entrances.

To be completely honest, Iris and I stuck out like a sore thumb. The difference in our bodies are huge. If you were to add both of our body sizes, it would be just about appropriate for this place.

But Iris showed no sign of caring about that.

With a confident face, she forced her way in through the strong-looking people.

After going in, she looked around and asked a bearded man, 'Can I confirm the rate over there?'

Conversely, it was the bearded man who was surprised, replying 'Ye-yes'.

Iris went toward a huge bulletin board where many large men were standing. I left all the arrangements to her so I just waited near the entrance.

"Sonny, you with the red hair."

Sonny? Me?

When I turned towards the direction the voice came from, I saw a well-built man probably in his prime time facing me.

The horizontal scar on his forehead was striking. I wonder if it's the proof of his past endeavours.

"Yes?"

“You’re a noble, aren’t you?”

Ah, as expected, they can understand.

Well, to be honest, the people here were kinda unclean. Calling it filthy wouldn’t be an exaggeration.

Compared to that, I was wearing clothes made with first-class material. Even in the city, the people who actually look can probably tell.

It was pretty obvious now that I think about it.

And it isn’t even like I was wearing it just to be luxurious.

It’s just that these clothes made with the best materials are long-lasting and better for trips. And this one picked was just unexpectedly better.

“I am. Do you need anything?”

“Gahahaha, even your response is refined, huh? You can rest assured, I didn’t come to pick on a noble kid. I am not stupid enough to oppose the nobles, you see.”

“Then, what do you need?”

“You don’t need to be so on alert, ‘right? It’s that, seeing a noble at a place like this just looks like a special bonus to people like us.”

“Special bonus? Me?”

“Yeah, you are. I know that there are all kinds of nobles out there. But I can

tell that you're no doubt of the upper class. Hunting monsters like this is only a hobby to you, isn't it?"

I guess it would seem like that from their perspective, huh?

I can't do anything about it even if it looks like that.

I am glad I wasn't punched out of nowhere.

"I will leave that to your imagination."

"Cool, aren't ya? Well, to be frank, you nobles mostly underestimate our job. Coming for amusement and getting hurt along the way by monsters. That pattern is exceedingly common. That's when our special bonus comes in."

"I see. Your motives are to save us when we are at a pinch and ask for a high charge?"

"Exactly. But it isn't a bad deal, is it? You will still be alive. Well, I will just give you this flute. We won't be too far so we can come real quick."

The man who couldn't be seen as anything except someone who is always fighting, handed over an unexpectedly clean, beautiful silver-made flute.

I guess nobles can do what they want over here as well.

There might be quite the lot of nobles who come here.

Seeing how used to he was dealing with me, I can only guess as much.

I wonder how much he actually wants from the nobles he saves.... Well, they would be paying for their own mistakes though.

“I am sorry but, it looks like I won’t be able to live up to your expectations.”

“Is that so? Well, everyone says that at first anyway. You’re carrying a pretty nice sword there so that will be enough as a reward. Negotiating during an emergency is a pain, after all.”

How shameless can one get.

Well, it’s not like I hate it. He doesn’t seem like a bad person either.

“Then, I will go now. My partner is here.”

“Oh, is that cute girl also with you? This looks like it will be a good profit.”

You’re still going on about it?

After that, the old man didn’t persistently stick with us.

They didn’t even follow us after we left the public office.

“What were you talking about with that old man just now?”

“Nothing, just that it looks like they will save us if we’re in trouble.”

“Hee~ I didn’t know such a service existed. There wasn’t anything like that written in the book though.”

“It seems to be a noble-only service. It comes with quite the payment too.”

“I see. That’s a pretty clever way to go about it.”

You can’t be learning from him!

“And so, we have someone to rescue us too as it seems, let’s go as wild as want.”

“Yep. I also want to swing this sword as soon as possible.”

“Then, let’s go! We will earn the inn’s cost at the very least!”

“Yea!”

It is said that monsters feed on the humans’ negative emotions and build up strength.

I don’t know if it actually is like that or not though.

There isn’t much information on how the monsters are actually born after all. There are also very few weirdos who like to research it. As there are no financial aid either, there isn’t much progress in that study.

The theory behind it is that, as there are more people in the capital, there will be more negative emotions swirling around and therefore more monsters. It’s just a theory.

And that’s how the monster hunting occupation came to be.

In the capital, there is the royal castle and the town centre where the nobles

live.

As the name suggests, it is at the centre of the capital and is surrounded by walls all around.

It is a place where commoners can't normally enter except for job-related visits.

Outside of that wall in the centre spreads out the vast capital where commoners live.

As there are a lot of people in the capital, and there are endless people coming in, the city is constantly expanding.

And so basically, there are no other walls like the one surrounding the centre.

Except just one area. At the west of the capital, in front of the forest where monsters dwell.

The capital is a city with a townscape expanding in a circle but, it is a bit different for the west side.

The city expands until the middle but, after a certain place being the boundary, suddenly the forest expands.

The border is a gigantic wall more than 5 metres.

The wall clearly parts the city and the forest.

However, the forest is also considered as part of the city by the populace.

From above, it would look like the capital was expanding in a circle but, the forest is also inside that circle.

And therefore, there are people who think of it as part of the city.

And over all else, its existence is indispensable for the monster hunters.

If you were wondering exactly why there was a forest in the metropolis, it is because monsters are mysteriously not born inside the city.

It is like a natural law for them to be born inside the forest.

However, there are also records of them being born inside the city if there are no forests nearby.

And thus, the forest was intentionally left there for the monsters to be born in.

It's like a necessary evil.

So that the forest doesn't get overrun with monsters, the monster hunting occupation was born.

In the capital, things has been properly set so that they get a worthy reward for it as well. The public office being an example, and also the book Iris had read, which was supplied by the capital's library.

Of course, there were also hospitals and all kinds of various institutions.

In the capital, as this side also exists, there are endless people flowing in to make a living with just their strength.

Even today, such rookies were heading for the forest, crossing the wall.

The appointed time had arrived and the two-layered door installed in the gate was opened.

All the hunters ran towards the forest at once.

Among them, Iris and I were also there.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 14

Some groups were advancing deep into the forest like they were used to it and some were just wandering languidly. Furthermore, even though the percentage was low but, I could also spot some people who were beginners just like us.

“Let’s not go too deep into the forest.”

“Yep, that’s the plan. The monsters deep inside are quite strong and move in packs so I am not even sure we would be able to safely leave if we go that deep. In these outer regions of the forest, we could even make a run towards the wall if things get rough.”

“I wonder if the group which went deep inside the forest were looking for the wanted monsters.”

“They were equipped with excellent weapons so I wouldn’t be surprised if they were. Either that or they know where you can earn the most in the forest. Because it seems like there’s kind of a rule to where the monsters will be born.”

“Hoho, that, I didn’t know.”

“I am not that knowledgeable about it myself since these were not listed on the books available in the school. It is probably based on their experience and that is why it’s not so widely known.”

The fact that you know of that itself makes you quite the knowledgeable person.

To be honest, to me, who is a complete amateur in this field, you look really reliable.

“By the way, how was the market price for the mob?”

“Hmm, honestly, it’s a miss this season. In spring, the goblins increase by a huge margin so the market price for it rises quite a lot but, there are no monsters with that good of a market price at the moment.”

“It looks like the monsters also like to rest in the winter, huh?”

“It sure does. So I chose one with moderate risk but reasonably good pay. For this time, I decided our target should be the Kobold.”

This time?! You plan on going again, don’t you?!

“Speaking of kobolds.... I don’t really know much about them but they walk on two feet, right? Also, I think they carry weapons?”

“That’s pretty much right. Their face is similar to dogs and they are about 2 metres tall. They don’t really move in packs so I think the risk is probably low.”

“Yep. I am okay with that.”

I would like to respect Iris’ thoughts rather than think of something off the mark.

She naturally has a lot of wisdom so she's a girl who can do react really well when in a crisis. To the point that even in fields I am more knowledgeable in, there are times when it is better to rely on her.

"Most of the kobolds live near the south side of the forest. But, we will be aiming for the ones living at the east side. These ones are mostly the ones who have been driven out from the pack and are of poor physique. Although their gems are cheaper but, this is our first time so I think it will be pretty appropriate."

Eh? It might be just my imagination but, did Iris just emphasize the 'first-time'?

Eh? She really plans on doing it. She definitely plans on coming again!

Well, even still, I was getting a little excited following Iris but, she was definitely more excited than I was.

"I think we'll be fine considering our skills. Besides, I don't really have an alternate plan so I will just follow you."

"Yep. I am counting on you too."

The east side of the forest was closer to the wall, the place from where everyone enters the forest.

Towards the south-east side of the forest, it is a little deep but the risk isn't as high.

There seem to be places deep in where even sunlight does not reach but, the area in which we arrived had quite a few thin rays of sunlight flowing in.

"It seems like visibility won't be a problem."

“Yep. Kobolds have sharp noses so we can’t do surprise attacks. And so, generally, the fights are face-to-face. But the kobolds in this area seem to run away a lot so we also need to be careful to not let them go.”

“Alright. But let’s not chase too deep if they make a run for it. If reinforcements arrive, it will turn into quite the mess too. Ah...”

As I was walking alongside Iris, I spotted a kobold-like figure in front of us, our target for the day.

There was still a gap of about 100 metres between the kobold and us. But I could see just a bit of it from the openings through the trees.

However, it looks like they were already aware of us, being in complete fighting stance.

With a sword-like weapon on one hand, it was walking towards us. Looks like it is pretty pumped up.

“It looks like they are pretty fast at noticing. It’s alone so, we are going to do it, right?”

“Yep. It seems to be about 180 cm. Exactly like my info, it looks like they are smaller than the south side ones.”

Iris and I drew our swords.

It looked like Iris was being quite happy with the sword when she was drawing it. I just hope she doesn’t hold back while fighting but, from the looks of it, I am a little worried.

Worst-case scenario, she might even use her body to protect the sword.

“Iris, I will be on the front. Assist me with magic from behind.”

“But your sword is short. I should be on the front.”

“If we get used to it, we can alternate but, I will be on the front now.”

As I stood in front, Iris erased her existence and closely watched the kobold from behind.

The kobold was now as close as 10 metres and it could come slashing any moment.

It’s face was like a dog – no, more like a fierce wolf.

It was drooling so it must be quite hungry.

It had a fat sabre on it’s hand and it’s body was covered with bristle. It looked bluish as a whole.

It did not seem to have any fear. As expected, they have quite the belligerent nature.

The kobold made a long jump and came lunging in with his sabre over his head. I could see his movements clearly.

I did land a counter-blow but, certainly received the sabre.

The shock ran through my hand but it was not of a level which could cause any problem.

I did not flick off his sword. It felt like I could win in a contest of strength but considering our ultimate goal today, it might be better to not use too much strength now. Besides, I also have an ally.

Before I even noticed, Iris circled around to the back of the kobold and after exchanging glances, invoked flame magic from both of her hands.

Sharp pointed spear shaped flame flew towards it.

The kobold hadn't noticed at all until the spear completely pierced through it.

The spear, which had pierced through the back and came out in front had barely reached me too before disappearing.

The kobold was defeated and its body turned into mist leaving a rugged bluish monster gem.

Fuu, that's done.

Even though I also barely escaped getting pierced.

While I picked up the gem, Iris came rushing over and said,

“Did I do well?”

“You did great. I didn't even realize when you circled around. Also, the magic was amazing too.”

To the point it had almost burned me to death.

“Really? I am glad I was useful.”

“Iris, how does this gem look? Does it look like it will be worth much?”

I handed the gem over to Iris and she stared fixedly at it, making her judgement.

That sure doesn't look like something a beginner can do.... Even that expression of closing one eye and staring at it with the other, what are you, a

person with decades of experience?!

“Yep, it would fall into the good price range.”

“That’s a good sign!”

We also received the evaluation from the professional monster gem appraiser Iris-san too, so I guess we could call this a great start.

We also don’t have any injuries and we are not even tired.

“Let’s go, let’s go.”

After walking for just a few minutes, we encountered another kobold.

This time they were a pair of two and as expected in fighting position since they noticed us just like the one before.

They have a good nose so it’s pretty much certain that they will notice us first and a surprise attack will not be possible but as of now, they all seem very belligerent. I wonder why. The info even says they run away quite a lot.

I wonder if we appear weak to them.

Surely, we would if you compare us to the usual hunters who come here.

Judging by one’s appearance, the height of folly. You will have a painful time.

“We will do it like before. I will hold both of them so you deal the final blow from behind. If I can, I will do it myself.”

“Understood.”

It was also like this before but, Iris really is impressive when she concentrates.

She had really went around the kobold before I realized.

Although the kobold was focusing on me, to escape that extraordinary sense of smell such that they can't even perceive your existence.

I can probably count on her this time as well.

The two kobold increased their speed and came straight towards me.

Iris had already hidden herself so even I couldn't tell where she was.

Both of the kobold came attacking together but one of them hesitated a bit which created a slight gap in between the attacks.

It was a very slight gap but, with this I could parry each of them one by one.

They did cut off the tip of my hair a bit but, I did pretty well parrying them, even if I do say so myself.

Their attacks continued after that. Their coordination was bad but both of them were stronger than the previous one. Now that I look at them properly, they do seem bigger as well.

I felt like I could get hit if I forced a counter so I made an effort to maintain this situation.

I repelled their swords but didn't go for the pursuit attack.

I just waited for Iris.

And just as I expected, a flaming spear came flying in.

The kobold who had hesitated at first had its head pierced through the bones.

As a proof of its death, it left the gem after turning into mist.

With that, it's a one-on-one now.

That makes it quite simple.

Iris was trying to land another hit but the kobold was already aware of her presence.

The possibility of it dodging was pretty high.

I could kill it myself but, Iris was preparing for one more attack so I waited for it.

And then, again, a spear came flying.

As expected, the kobold had noticed her and splendidly dodged it.

But as it was completely defenseless mid-air, I immediately closed in the gap to attack with my sword but then, another flaming spear came flying. It seems like Iris had prepared two from the start, using the first one as a bait and the second to kill it off.

As we had both aimed for the defenseless kobold, our coordination was completely off.

Moreover, as she sent two in a row, it lacked accuracy and of all things, lined up parallel to my vision.

I used my sword as a shield in a hurry and my sword won, not letting the spear pierce.

But the magic in it split and spread covering my body with flames.

As the kobold landed, it ran away as it saw me in flames. It probably sensed it couldn't win 2 to 1.

That is fine and everything but, first, I needed to get rid of this flame covering me.

Even though I was covered with flames, I didn't feel any pain. Conversely, that

was what was scary.

I rolled all over the ground but the flames didn't go out.

Iris' magic is too strong!

Next thing I knew, Iris came rushing over and used water magic.

The impact from the flowing in water was dreadful.

Cold! My body felt cold.... Hmm? This is strange.

The fire was still not vanishing.

In fact, my statically cold body became pleasantly warm from the water.

And what is this? From some time ago, I feel like I am overflowing with strength.

"I-Iris! That's enough of the magic! It feels somewhat strange."

Hearing my voice, Iris stopped using her water magic.

The water which was hitting me made sizzling noises and evaporated.

The water radically changed to water vapour, shrouding the surrounding area in mist.

"Th-this is?!"

Iris was too surprised to even continue.

I was also surprised, of course. Why? Because my body has been on fire for quite a while now.

The flames were thunderously rumbling thunderously and didn't try to leave my body.

The flaming spear I had received to the cheek from Iris, which was supposed to have spread and covered me, was now strangely feeling like a part of me. It won't be an exaggeration if I were to say it was a part of me.

I didn't feel any pain. When I looked closely, there were no wounds anywhere on my body so of course, there wouldn't be any pain.

"I, somehow feel really good. This is a weird feeling. I am aware that I have a somewhat optimistic personality but, now, I feel like I can obtain anything I want. No, like, I can see the whole world. Anyhow, I just feel weird."

"I also learned healing magic recently but, do you need it?"

"Doesn't look like it. What is this, really.... Or rather, when is this going to disappear?"

"Sorry. It's all because I did not sent it flying accurately enough."

"No, it's okay. We weren't coordinating well. It isn't either of our mistake."

It actually is not.

This is our first hunt and two really good magic users teaming up like this is probably quite rare so I think this mistake won't happen normally.

Our coordination will get better as we work together more.

In the first place, there's not a bug that wouldn't arise in this sudden cheat-like fighting method.

On the other hand, the flame is not disappearing in the slightest.

I have red hair so I can't even say if my hair is on fire or not.

"Ah! Perhaps, because I use fire magic everyday while smithing so I got a weird disease or something."

"This is definitely not related to smithing! If that was the case, the world would be filled with weird people!"

It seems like Iris was feeling more uneasy than me.

I have gotten quite used to it but, I guess it would look quite bad to others.

I guess it's that '*the anxiety that comes from doing nothing is worse than any danger you might face.*' thing.

Well, I guess Iris would be anxious since I am *burning* after all.

It's starting to spark. Is it spreading to the trees?

"Potatoes.... I wonder if we can roast some potatoes in it."

"You're quite carefree, aren't you now?! Well, I guess it's fine if you're fine. What shall we do? Shall we return once? Or rather, is it even okay to return like this?"

Certainly, this is bad from a common perspective.

"No, but we haven't yet earned the inn charge."

“I don’t think we are in any position to think about that, though?!”

“We will definitely earn the inn charge! No matter what happens!”

“I am grateful! I am grateful but, you’re *burning!* Ahh, this is bad. I have been surprised a lot by you till now but I think my head might just burst this time!”

Iris sat down looking all tensed.

Ah, what do I do? This is bad.

I am sure she will probably calm down if the fire just goes out.

“Ah, it might disappear if you hit me with the spear again.”

“You want me to burn you even while you’re still burning?!”

Ah, I can’t really put anymore burden on Iris.

Imagination is important in magic so I wonder if I can do something about it with my imagination.

I feel my blood really boiling now. It might just be me but, I feel like the fire has increased its vigour.

I took a deep breath.

And the flames calmed down a bit. As I expected, that is what it is.

So I sat down and calmed my heart.

While I tried to block off all thought and feelings, before I knew, my heart had been calmed down.

And also, the flame covering me.

“Whew, clearing complete!”

“So optimistic! You’re too optimistic! You were burning just a while ago, you know?!”

“Now, now, calm down, Iris. It doesn’t seem like I sustained any damage. As you see, I am doing fine and I also feel like my skin has gotten more silky smooth.”

“It has a skin beautifying effect?!!”

“Ah, it also looks like I am sweating a lot. Feels like all the bad stuff are flowing out of my body.”

“Detox effect too?!”

Looks like that made Iris a little jealous since she is a girl so her agitated feeling had also changed into curiosity.

“How can you do stuff like that? I don’t really think smithing or your hair color has anything to do with it.”

“Maybe your magic had a weird effect?”

“Then that should have also applied to the monsters. And also, I used a lighter

version of it on neko-sensei in school too. But it only burned some fur.”

You used it on someone?!

So that was what happened when neko-sensei’s whiskers were curled that one day.

“Then I guess the problem is on my part.”

“Does anything come to mind?”

“.....”

It isn’t like anything does not come to mind.

To be honest, something does come to mind.

That weird magic book at our home.

Thanks to that, I learned magic differently from your normal magician.

It had the suspicious vibe all over it but the contents were pretty good, now that I think about it.

It was quite easy to understand and all the main points were listed.

Uwah, it is definitely that. I can’t think of anything other than that book I got from old man Moran.

“....It does.”

“It does?!”

“It does but, I am not sure. There wasn’t anything like this written there.”

“So that means it is a book? Hee~ there are quite a lot of strange things in the world, huh?”

“It’s one I have been reading since I was a child. I didn’t finish it yet since the difficulty level also increased and I didn’t make much progress.”

“Since you were a child. You are strange because you have been reading that then, huh?”

Oi, your true opinion is leaking.

You are completely saying *strange*, you know.

“Ah, no! I see, I see. I can agree to why you are so first-class now. Yep.”

I already heard it!

I already heard you saying *strange*!

“Nn?”

I was kinda feeling it since I suppressed the flames inside my body but, there’s no doubt now, my senses feel more sharp.

“There are 5 kobolds coming this way from south, 200 metre away. They are about 2 metre tall. Undoubtedly stronger than these ones.”

“Uwaah, you became a person from another world!! Or rather, you were a person from another world!”

What do mean *were*!?

Ah, do you mean the difference between commoners and nobles? Then I guess it's fine.

“I feel like my senses have gotten really sharp. I can even hear your heartbeat clearly.”

“Eh?”

Blushing, Iris put her hands on her chest.

Eh? Did I say something weird?

“Ah, no. Sorry, actually, I can't hear it.”

“It's okay. It was also weird of me to feel weird. It's just that, it was the first time someone heard my heartbeat.”

Ah, did I just steal away her first beat? What even is a first beat?!

“Iris, it looks like they also noticed us. It seems like they can smell us from about 200 metres away.”

“I-I see...”

She looks somewhat doubtful.

I guess she would be, huh? Being all sage mode on her all of a sudden.

If the prince was like this before me, I would have probably gone home. Yep, would have definitely gone home.

“Is it okay if I kill them?”

“What do you mean?”

“The flames have calmed down but, I still feel overflowing power from within. I feel like emitting it with some magic.”

“If that’s so, then I guess it’s okay.....”

Iris looked up at anxiously.

However, when the kobolds actually appeared from the south, Iris' anxiousness started to turn into surprise.

I concentrated on my right hand and focused magic on it.

The same fire magic Iris had used.

There are a few of them so I will pass on the fire spear.

Instead I will go with fire sphere to annihilate them.

As I concentrated my power, the fire sphere was complete at once.

“Wa-wait, Kururi! It’s big! It’s big, too big, too big!! The forest will completely burn down!!!”

An enormous fire sphere appeared before my right hand.

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Volume 4 Chapter 15

A somewhat *big* ball of fire materialized before me.

In front of my right hand, a super-high class ball of flame appeared, which was big enough to cover Iris and me as a whole.

The one I had imagined would not even be tenth of the size of this one. But, when I tried doing it, it naturally became this large.

“I-it looks like I’ve awakened somehow?”

“You don’t say?! Forget about the kobolds, at this *level*, I am worried about the whole forest!”

Iris was so close to blowing her fuse that her pronunciation of level was really good.

I can’t say since I was pretty much at my wits’ end myself.

“The kobolds are still coming anyway so... I was thinking of hitting them with this.”

“Will it really be okay? Using such a big ball of fire here.”

“Well, I can’t really guarantee anything.”

“Would it be better if I hide?”

“Ah, then how about behind that tree?”

Confirming that Iris had hid herself, I released the ball of fire towards the kobolds.

The ball went straight, destroying everything in its path. Then, it hit the ground and exploded.

The condensed mana in the ball burst and reduced the kobolds to ashes. Immediately after, it burst again producing an intense shock, which created a small storm.

Small stones and tree branches were flying in the wind.

I guarded my face with my arms but it completely hit my body. Good

judgement by Iris to hide.

After the light and the shock wave created by the explosion had slowly settled down, I lowered my arms and glanced at the place the kobolds were.

All the trees and overgrown grass there had completely disintegrated.

Only pitch black cinders remained.

I wonder if it will look like a new mystery circle from above.

Well, I was the one who did it so I guess there would be no mystery.

Iris had suddenly appeared from behind and was giving me a surprised look.

“It feels like the terrain.... has opened up only here, huh?”

“Yep, it looks pretty bad.”

“I don’t think that but, it would be a pain to explain.”

Certainly. I wonder how I will explain it. I guess ‘I kinda awakened and did it by mistake, teehee~’ won’t work, huh?

“Kururi, are you okay? Was there a huge recoil?”

“No, I am okay. But the feeling I have been getting for some time seems to be settling down. All the huge mysterious energy are calming down.”

“Really? That’s good then. You won’t be able to live normally like that after all. You might blow away your smithy or something.”

Ah, I feel kinda bad making her worry even about that.

“But, if it’s only two of those balls, I can do it.”

“So it was not okay at all?!”

After explaining to her that there was no need for concern, we went to collect the monster gems.

First, the one we defeated in the beginning.

After giving it one look, Iris nodded so I guess the gem is pretty good.

Next, we went to the burnt area.

I burnt the kobolds all at once so I wonder if the gems are still remaining.

I am a bit worried...

On the still slightly warm ground, five red, glowing, gem-like stones were gathered.

This is probably the gem. When I picked it up, I knew there was surely magic in it. It's a safe bet.

But.... till now, the gems have been bluish. That is the characteristic of kobolds' gems but this one is red.

Did I.....?

"Iris, the quality of these gems seem to have worsened."

"Let me see."

After handing it over to Iris-sensei, I waited for her judgement.

It is a heart-pounding moment. I hope it is at least enough for today's dinner!

"This is...."

"This is?!"

"Good!"

It is good!? I thought I burned it or something but, it's good?!

"It being red is still okay?"

"Yep, it seems to be the gem of a subspecies. You can't get these from normal kobolds. Only the kobolds who have lived really long and are stronger drop these gems. But the ones before seemed pretty normal...."

Yep, it definitely is my fault then.

"Don't make that regretful face! This is good. We can sell these for quite a lot!"

"Ahh, I see. So, I should be happy?"

"Yep. So much as to jump up and down."

Then, I guess I will... or so I thought but I didn't. It would be too embarrassing.

“Did we earn enough for the inn charge?”

“This is just an approximation but, even after paying the inn charge, we would have a lot left!”

Oohh?! Then should I really jump up and down?!

There are quite a lot of things to think about like the awakening or entering the royal castle but, we accomplished our immediate objective so I am happy. One should be happy during happy times.

While we were being delighted looking at the gems again, we heard footsteps from the east side of the forest.

We instantly got cautious.

The wonderful senses I felt before had disappeared.

I had no choice but to wait for them to show themselves. While I was securely in stance, they showed.

It was a group of 5 men.

Not monsters, but people from the same profession.

“Oh, well aren’t you the noble boy from before?”

“.....?”

It looks like they already knew about me.

I had honestly forgotten but, it is probably the guy who gave me the flute. They all looked rough and dirty so I couldn’t tell them apart. Sorry but, if you want me to remember you, you need to be a little weird.

It was the old man who gave me the silver flute.

“Hey, I was the one who gave you the flute at the office. Did you already forget?”

“Ah, no, I just remembered. It looks like the flute won’t be needed so I will return it.”

It was made of silver and looked valuable so I returned it. After all, they might come making weird demands for it later.

"I see. I was planning on demanding cash if you didn't give it back. Most of the nobles generously pay up."

He really had that ulterior motive?!

He seems to be a pretty honest man.

"Oi oi, more importantly, we saw a big explosion around here. That black spot seems to be the place. Could it be that you guys did it?"

"....."

I exchanged glances with Iris.

She was making a complicated face.

".....Uh no.."

"That's definitely a lie, isn't it?! What was that pause just now?! It completely gave away the lie."

"What would you do if it was us?"

"Well, for now, our incidental income source would be gone. I don't really think anyone who can use such huge magic needs any help anyway. In fact, we would like to request some stuff if that's the case."

"Only that? Ah, then, I did it."

"What is with the 'then'? Say that from the start. Oh but, you might receive a penalty if you harm the forest too much. This forest is essential for the capital after all."

"Ah, then, it wasn't me."

"Oi! You're saying some really unreasonable things!"

The old men were too bothersome so I decided to leave the place.

"Iris, let's run."

"The moment you say you're running proves that you did something bad!"

I felt like getting involved with this men won't be good so I grabbed Iris' hand

and started walking.

“Wait, wait a minute. I have a good deal, won’t you listen?”

Good deal?

“Yes, just wait a bit. It’s not like I will tell anyone you were the one who burned the forest. Just listen to my deal.”

If that’s the case then I guess I could listen for a bit. Good deals are both Iris and my favourite thing.

“Our first objective was to save you guys and receive reward in large. Second was to mark our target monster. For safety, we just aimed for these two for today.”

We’re the people concerned with the first objective so it certainly doesn’t feel that good. Exactly how much were you planning to take?

“These two were our aims for the day. We only wanted to locate the targeted monster today but, with someone as strong as you, we could just hunt it today.”

“This isn’t risky, is it?”

“There’s no doubt the monster will be strong since it is wanted but, you could expect a lot in return. After all, we will receive the gem price, the special reward from the office, and also a huge amount of reward money placed by the nobles. It is the noble we saved last time. The monster we saved him from still appears in his dreams so he wants it dead. It is a selfish request but, there are no better deals for us.”

Certainly, it does sound good.

However, there’s no doubt it will be dangerous.

I asked the exact amount and it sure was a good deal.

Honestly, that reward money from the noble is huge. Surprisingly huge. As expected of the capital, the whole scale is different.

I was honestly fine doing either but I wonder what Iris thought of it.

When I peeked into Iris’ face.... her eyes were sparkling.

She definitely wants to do it. There's no doubt she will happily agree if I agree.

If I am against it then... she will probably be sad but will accept it.

"If you have such strong magic which can burn down the forest then even rear support will do fine. We will hold it down on the front line."

Is it just me or does this deal sound even better now?

"We will get half, right?"

"Nope. I had to pull quite a few strings to get this deal. 7:3 it is."

"6:4, and we are in."

"Alright then, let's do that."

Seeing how easily he accepted, he was probably going for 6:4 from the beginning. I kinda feel defeated.

"Iris, so that's how it is but, are you okay with it?"

"Of course!"

She was more than agreeing. Well, I already knew anyway.

"We haven't introduced ourselves yet, did we? I am a hunter, Galdomira. In this industry, my name is quite popular."

"I am Kururi Helan. Not very popular in the noble club."

"Pleasure to meet ya. I love strong people. Speaking of Helan, it's that huge land near the border.... Also, I kinda feel like I heard the name Kururi before...."

"You're probably thinking of someone else. I came here after quite a few years."

"Is that so? Well, it's okay. Then, I will lead, so follow me."

After grouping up with Galdomira's party, we decided to follow them.

They were used to going around the forest.

We could even cross muddy places easily. They were quite experienced.

"Do say if you're feeling hungry. I could give some to you for a fee."

"We have our own so it's fine."

I answered back. And in fact, we did have plenty food supply. There was no way Iris would neglect preparations.

“Missy, you’re a commoner, right? I kinda feel an affinity with you.”

“I am a commoner but having Galdomira-san feel an affinity towards me kinda feels weird.”

Right? I know where she is coming from, it would certainly be weird.

“Kururi is noble but, I somehow feel more of an affinity towards you compared to other nobles.”

Me too?!!

“Oh, it looks like this is the place the target was spotted on. Let’s rest here a while.”

As Galdomira told the crew to do that, everyone put their baggages down.

We also followed them.

One of Galdomira’s subordinates climbed up a tree and was looking for the target in that time.

“Gal, it seems to be right ahead.”

It seems like he was really looking for it and found it. I guess there is that way of doing stuff as well. They are surprisingly good at it.

“What’s the distance?”

“Looks to be around 350 meters.”

That’s close. Then this place was probably as close as we could go.

“We will make a plan so you guys come too.”

Plan, eh? Hmm, what shall I do?

“About that, shall I do it?”

“Eh?”

“No, like, I was asking if I should do it. It’s 350 meters from here right? Then I

think I can get it. That way it's safer and easy, right?"

".....Eh?... Ah, sorry, you can do something like that?"

"I think it will reach. I feel really good now too."

"Hahah, that's amazing. Even though you are noble. That's okay, if you can do it, then try doing it. If you can get it like this, it's okay to split the reward in half."

Are you serious!?

I guess it is always worth suggesting, huh?

"Kururi, don't tell me you're planning on using that big one again?!"

"No, that probably can't go that far so I was thinking of going with a different one."

"Will it really be okay? The forest I mean...."

Ah, you are worried about the forest....

Well, I have been entrusted with the attack so I also confirmed the target with the monocle.

I certainly saw it. Or rather, it's huge.

It's probably more than 3 meters. It also has muscles and clearly gives off a more intimidating aura. Moreover, it's even more scary that it is carrying a boulder as a weapon.

That weapon in itself shows the holder's strength.

I got up on an even closer tree and reaffirmed the target.

Fixing on the trajectory, I invoked my magic.

I poured all the remaining large quantity of mana and created a bow and arrow with magic. When I just condensed the mana, I could touch it with my bare hand.

Fixing the arrow to the bow string, I pulled with all my strength.

Just before releasing, I made the arrow head into flames with my mana.

It was a super condensed arrow with intense heat. The target can't be

unscathed after getting hit by this.

Accurating my aim, I released the arrow.

The arrow made of mana flew straight ahead.

It was made up of my mana so I could also control it while it flew.

I kept on accelerating it, and adjusting the trajectory every time it shifted even a millimeter.

Accelerate, accelerate, accelerate,.....

After accelerating multiple times, the arrow had already pierced through the target's head.

The arrow kept on going with its momentum and hit the ground, gouging it out till it disappeared.

Remote controlling it took quite a lot of my mana but, I was able to accomplish the task.

The target collapsed on the ground.

After a while, the body turned to mist, leaving a gem. It was a success.

“Well color me surprised. To think such a master existed among the nobles.... Moreover, he is still young.”

“I was just feeling specially good today, that’s it.”

While we were talking, Galdomira’s subordinates went to collect the gem.

“Kururi Helan, eh.... I will remember you.”

“I see. I might forget about you by tomorrow though.”

“That is troubling. I could’ve asked for your help with other good deals too.”

“Ah, then, I guess I will remember you.”

“To your convenience, eh? By the way, where are you guys staying? If it’s not a place in the nobles area then it will be easier for us to enquire.”

“Nn? The royal castle.”

“Eh?”

“The royal castle.”

“The royal castle?!”

And like this, Iris' and my first hunter experience had closed its curtain.

After that, we left the forest and shared the reward with Galdomira and the others, and left for the royal castle.

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Volume 4 Chapter 16

We earned quite a lot, so we decided to finally head for the royal castle.

It was our first time at the castle.

Honestly, my heart was pounding and I felt my heartbeats to be quite loud. Probably just me.

The more I tell it to calm down, it just increases even more.

Even thinking of not thinking about it is actually thinking about it. I have no choice now that it has come to this. I will just be a bumpkin all the way.

“Uwaa, it’s huge~”

“Yea, it’s huge~”

In front of us, stood a wall of about 5 meters. I don’t know the thickness but from the looks of it, I was sure my tackles won’t do much.

We came as guests so I had decided to properly enter through the main gate but now that I am here, I kinda feel like I was wrong.

The main gate, which was full of designs, really had a presence.

And the castle, which could be seen at the back, seemed like one straight out of a fairytale, made out of chalk.... It looked like a castle which would take us to a dream world.

It tickles my adventure-loving heart, it kinda makes me a little jealous that the princes live here, and I feel embarrassed feeling so out of place.... Ah, my head is spinning.

Iris and I were staring at the castle deep within, raising our heads by standing on tiptoes. It completely exposes our bumpkin-ness but we can’t help it. Especially the topmost part of the castle.

“What are you doing staring like that?! You suspicious two!”

There were quite a few people walking in and out of the castle but we were the only ones staring at the castle for so long.

And so the gatekeeper pointed his long spear at us but, isn't that just being too quick-tempered?

What would you do if we were guests? Wait, we are guests.

Moreover, it is not a nice response towards country bumpkins who come to sightsee. Just looking should be fine, right? Or is it that this quick-tempered or sensitiveness is required for a gatekeeper?

"Hey, we are not anyone suspicious. We actually have business here."

"Business? You really think you can fool me with that appearance?"

We finally noticed after he pointed it out.

We actually had quite a bit of dirt on our clothes here and there.

We came here directly after getting out of the forest.

Well, we did get rid of the blatant dirt, you know? Maybe we became a little carefree after that hunt.

And, now that he pointed it out, it is even more embarrassing. I didn't even think the castle would be so majestic, it was totally a miss on our part.

And thus, we were under suspicion of whether we were really guests or not.

And now that I look around a bit, since the main gate is so huge, the amount of guests on foot is extremely low. My face got hot. I feel like it will burn up out of embarrassment.

"We are prince Arch's school friends and we also received an invitation to come today. We may be a little dirty but... that's because we fell down along the way."

"That's completely suspicious. There were many people in the past who came saying similar lies just to meet the prince. If you were really invited, then let me see the invitation card."

Invitation card?!..... We don't have that, do we?

.....We don't have one."

"Well, it's settled then. I could capture you both right here but, the king is a very generous person. He says to properly respect even youngsters like you. I don't mean you harm so just leave already."

Said the guard shooing us away with his hands.

He had lowered his spear so he probably meant that he won't do anything so we should just leave.

This is troubling. I didn't think we would be turned away at the main gate.

I thought Rahsa had properly made the arrangements. I wonder if the outcome would have changed if we came wearing clean clothes.

No, there is still a chance if I introduce myself.

"Kururi Helan and Iris Balala. Were you not told anything about letting these two pass if they come?"

"....Certainly, I was told to let Miss Iris pass if they were to come. But I heard nothing about a Kururi Helan."

Why?!

That's the opposite! I was the one who was invited as a guest!

"However, she differs quite a lot from the information I received from the prince. He said Miss Iris was beautiful like an angel, fleeting like a sakura petal, and has a smile as bright as the sun which could lighten up everyone's mood and bring happiness. To be honest..... that girl over there is pretty but she is quite different from what the prince told me. She also has dirt on her clothes...."

We have to deal with this annoyance just because the prince exaggerated way too much?!

So Iris looked like that to the prince, huh?

I kinda want and not want to know what he thinks of me at the same time.....

The situation didn't seem to be changing for the better so I decided to use some underhanded tactics.

Drawing near the gatekeeper, I whispered in his ears.

“I didn’t really want to say this but, guard-san, do you not realize you’re making quite a big mistake here?”

“Nn? Are you trying to persuade me or something?”

“Yes. Not only are you not letting the could-be queen pass, but you also called her dirty. Imagine what might happen if the prince hears about this. Even as it is, the prince has told you to let Iris pass if she comes. Aa-ahh, promotion looks quite distant, doesn’t it?”

“Gguu.... that’s not fair. But, certainly, if that is the case then I will be in an extremely bad position.”

“Right? You can still recover from this.”

“Ri-right. Alright, I will confirm it. You better be prepared if you are lying.”

The guard I just talked to hurried over to the small entrance in the wall.

The gaze of the remaining guards were sharp.

I wonder what they would do to us if it really was a lie. It is not though! Hmm? It isn’t, right? I was properly invited, right?! Oh no, I am getting anxious.

After a while, the guard came back.

He was out of breath so he must have ran back. Or perhaps, did he get scolded by the prince?

“I am truly sorry! Miss Iris, after I conveyed your features to the prince, he said you were the one. I have been terribly impolite with my words but, please forgive me!”

“It’s okay, it’s okay. I didn’t really mind.”

Iris forgave the guard with a smile. As expected of Iris. I wonder if he will apologize to me as well.

“Aah, you are as kind as an angel. Please, come, Miss Iris. The prince is waiting.”

Making a 180-degree change in personality, the guard lowered himself and invited Iris to the gate.

The huge gate was opened. Opening such a huge gate, it would take quite the

effort.

I feel like the guard gate would have been enough for two people though.

As she passed through the gate, I smiled at the guard.

Fuh, we are proper guests, you see!

“Wa-wait a minute, please!”

I was also going to follow Iris through the gate but was stopped by that guard.

“Ah, Miss Iris, don’t mind and please go through.”

A female attendant waiting on the other side of the gate escorted Iris.

Iris went in ahead.

“Wait, what about me?”

“About that, after asking the prince, he said that Kururi Helan was not his guest. I am sorry but, I request you to leave.”

That prince!! Now it’s an all-out war! Oi!

Let’s do it here and now! Come out, you!

1 vs 1! Don’t you dare use the guards!

I got surrounded by guards and thrown out of the gate. Then the gate was closed.

It is manual labour so, I appreciate their efforts.

Not! Why can I not get in!? Am I a guest? I am actually a guest!!

“Really? They are really not letting me in?”

“Yes, we can’t let a suspicious person enter, after all.”

What should I do? I feel like I might get adrift in the streets. Well, I do have money so there’s that.

“Let me stay over at your place, guard-san!!”

“Obviously, I would not!”

“It was a joke. Ah, right. I was invited by the second prince Rahsa. Come on, confirm it with Rahsa.”

“Oi, add ‘sama’! Rahsa-sama has not said anything about you. But, you were together with Miss Iris so I will check, for what it’s worth.”

Ah, now that I think about it, I haven’t written back to Rahsa.

Of course, I did not even tell him that I was coming.

I wanted to surprise him by coming suddenly.

Thanks to that, I am the one being surprised.

“What is your relation to Rahsa-sama?”

“We are the best of friends, of course!”

“Oi, don’t talk so crudely in front of Rahsa-sama. Rahsa-sama is just and upright, so he might forgive you but don’t be impolite. Ah, in the first place, it isn’t even decided if you actually know him or not.”

“Come on, I will let you in the hot springs at Helan territory for free so let me in already. I am tired too, you know.”

“We still have not confirmed. Wait a bit more. So you are from Helan territory, eh? Ah, your last name is Helan too.”

“Right? See, I am not anyone suspicious. Really, let me in. I will also add a manju to that offer.”

“A manjuu too? Well, that’s not the problem here. I will come by soon. And if you are really an acquaintance of the prince then we will officially let you in as well. More importantly, why don’t you have an invitation card?”

“Who even brings invitation card when going over to their friend’s place?”

“Friend’s place... this is the royal castle, you know?”

“I also thought that! I also thought about it at the school! But a lot happened and, in short, I was being naive!”

“I-Is that so? Well, wait just a bit longer, he will come soon.”

Ahh, I don’t like this. I don’t want to wait anymore.

This is not fair, only letting Iris in.

That Arch prince! You better remember this!

I will take revenge for this one day!

Ahh, I am tired. I was fighting with monsters just a while ago, you know?

I just found out right now that the fatigue kicks in like a surge after fighting with monsters if you are not used to it.

..... I decided to wait while lying down.

To also express my feelings of protest, I lied down with my face up. My clothes are dirty anyway. I can't be caring about a little dirt at this point.

"What are you doing?! Why are you lying down?!"

".....Protest.... Fatigue..... Sulking....."

"So easy to understand! Okay, I understand! I clearly understand!"

It looks like he understood.

While I was throwing a tantrum, the main gate started moving again.

The grandiose stone gate opened up.

On the other side of the gate was the one who called me over, Rahsa.

He was wearing a smile but it soon disappeared.

Ah, this is bad. I wonder if it was bad to wait like this.

"You fools! Did you use violence against Aniki?!"

"N-no, we would never...."

"Then why is he collapsed over there?!!"

Ooops, it seems like my waiting position has gave him a wrong impression.

Sorry, guard-san. They were properly doing their job.

"Rahsa, you got it wrong. A lot happened and I just happened to lie there."

"What happened that made you collapse?! There is no way something like that happened! You bastards, I won't forgive you for using violence taking advantage of kind Aniki!!"

"Ah, no, Rahsa? Really, nothing happened."

"I like that side of you, Aniki. But, there are times when you should get angry."

And that time is now! You bastards, I hope you're prepared!!"

Rahsa drew his sword and was pretty serious so I tried with my utmost effort to explain.

I desperately tried stopping Rahsa as he was chasing the guard around. And this continued for a while.

Even entering the royal castle was hard. My fatigue reached its peak and now this....

Should I just leave now?

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Volume 4 Chapter 17

“It’s because you were doing those weird things that I misunderstood, Aniki.”

“Sorry, sorry.”

I safely made it into the castle but it seems that Rahsa is still a little mad.

The guards were silently whispering ‘That is the first time I have seen Rahsa-sama get so angry’ so I guess it is quite an unusual sight.

After getting to know the truth, Rahsa has been feeling awkward. Sorry~

“Putting that aside, thank you very much for coming. I am truly very happy you actually came. During your time here, I, Rahsa Kudan, promise to not let you feel any discomfort.”

“Thank you for that. But don’t be too tense now. After all, I just came to hangout at a friend’s house.”

“Ah, that is right. Then, please, think of this place as your own home while you spend your time here. Really, it is completely fine even if you laze around all day on the sofa.”

Yeah, I am probably not going to do that though.

Even at my home, I only do it about once a month.

Rahsa guided me into the guest room.

The quarters in which the royalties live in lie on the opposite side of the castle.

The room I was guided into was too luxurious to be called just the ‘guest room’.

it was big, it had high class furniture all around the room, and it had 4 to 5 expensive-looking pictures hanging on the walls. It was even several times bigger than the largest room at my place.

The structure of the room was really calming but I relaxed so much that on the contrary, I couldn't relax at all. I no longer even understand my own feelings properly. Rather, who is this room for, really? Unless they're royalties of another country, I can't imagine anyone being able to relax here.

"This is the room we let the royalties of other countries use when they pay a visit."

It was really for royalties then?!

Ah, this is impossible. There's no way I can stay here.

"A bit more, you know, cosy-ish compact rooms would be nice, I think~. This one is so vast I can't quite get accustomed to it."

"Ah, is that so? I had kept this room since you might be coming for winter break but.... For some reason elder brother also desperately wanted this room but I pushed through and didn't let him have it, you know? But, if you would prefer somewhere else, it is a shame but let's go to another room then."

Don't tell me prince Arch wanted Iris to use this room?!

Where did the whole 'employee' plan go?!

"It pains me to offer this but, how about it? We prepare this room when landlords visit. It is quite inferior to the previous one but...."

It is more than enough though? In fact, that is quite exactly my position here though?

It is more confined than the previous one but far more comfortable. The one before not only was huge in size, its ceiling was also really high which kinda made it feel less like a room. This one is quite big and actually somewhat matches the rooms of my own house. When I looked at the furniture one by one, I did notice there were differences but I don't really have much knowledge of them anyway so it did not bother me.

"Thank you. Then I will choose this one, it's a nice room."

"Ah, but I still can't have you feel any sort of discomfort, Aniki. If you need anything at all, just ring the calling bell over there and someone of the castle will definitely come."

That's too convenient. I wonder if it will be okay if I use it in the middle of the night when I feel a little hungry? To make me a small late-night snack.

They won't scold me like 'You will get fat!' or 'Why at a time like this?' right?

"By the way, did you come alone, Aniki? I surely thought you would have Iris-san with you."

"Like you thought, I did come with Iris but she was taken away by your wonderful. big brother."

"Haaa, then that was why he was panicking so much when he had come back. Don't tell me he was trying to prepare that room for Iris-san too?! Impossible! There's no way Iris-san would want to use it...."

Fufu, so you have realized, Rahsa. Your elder brother is stupid. He is usually sharp but, as soon as it turns to something related to love, he turns into an idiot. That's the true nature of your brother.

"It would be fine if he doesn't do anything weird.... I shall look into it later. More importantly, Aniki, you should rest to soothe your travel fatigue. I have already prepared the bath for you."

"A bath, eh? I am grateful."

The arrangements I saw since I have entered the castle were amazing. As expected of Rahsa.

I thankfully chose to take him up on his offer.

The sun had not yet sunk.

It does feel a bit early for a bath but since I am also quite dirty, I think it would be better to take one right now.

Rahsa went to see how Iris was doing so an attendant guided me to the bath.

I wonder exactly where she was hiding since she immediately appeared after Rahsa called.

Could they be using the *Anywhere Door*?

"Kururi-sama, Rahsa-sama has instructed me to prepare this bathhouse for you. Shall I wash the clothes you are wearing? If you have any preference of

clothing, I can arrange that.”

“Then, please wash it. And about the substitute clothing, something easy to move in, please.”

“Yes, I will be at it then.”

After having that conversation, the attendant disappeared. She might have used the *Anywhere Door*.

After taking off my clothes in the changing room, I went into the bath with a towel on my shoulder.

“Uwaa~”

Well, this is one huge bathhouse.

Is it something like a large public bath, I wonder. So that everyone working at the castle could use it. I kinda feel it is too luxurious for that but it is the royal castle so this just might be the standard here.

This is the first time I saw one of those naked woman statues holding a pot with water flowing from it. As expected of the royal castle, too good!

It did seem to be a little too early so I was the only one in the bath.

I can keep it all to myself until someone comes. This is the best.

I washed my body before getting into the hot bath.

There were so many brands of shampoos that I didn't understand which one to use. I worked quite a bit of sweat so I tried to use 2-3 brands.

All of them had strong fragrance. Moreover, my hair became very silky.

My cuticles haven't had the best treatment all these times so I guess I will give them plenty of shampoo now.

While I was scrubbing my head hard with the shampoo, I could hear the sound of someone's footsteps.

It seems like the 2nd visitor has arrived. I guess this is it of keeping the bath to myself.

I was planning to apply soap all over my body and slide from one side of the bath to the other if no one came but, it is a shame.

“Oya? It is quite rare for someone to be here before me.... A red haired guest, eh...?”

Since I have been spoken to, I forced myself to look. A man in his prime was standing there.

I would have liked to not have been spoken to since I have foam on my eyes but, I decided to reply to not be rude.

“Ah, hello. I took the privilege of entering the bath first.”

“I see. It has been quite long since someone has entered before me.”

“Ah, is that so? I am sorry then.”

“No need to be so upright. Bath is something everyone would use.”

“I see.”

What is this old man talking about?

‘Quite long since someone entered before me’? What happened to your job?! I wonder if he’s considerably free.

I guess there are people like that in the royal castle as well.

He looks quite good. Seems like one of those ‘good men’.

Blonde hair, well-featured face with a few wrinkles and a nice mustache.

A guy from a decent family, somehow getting a job in royal castle but being incompetent, he causes problems to the surrounding. But, as he looks good, one way or the other, he gets helped by the women and lives his life.

I passed my judgement on the old guy. Sorry if it is wrong.

“The foam will get into your eyes. Slowly clean them.”

“Ah, yes.”

I was planning on doing just that even without you telling me. He was standing beside me wearing a gentle smile. What is this person? He looks good

but he is kinda creepy.

“This shampoo is pretty good, is it not? I chose it.”

“Ah, is that so?”

Not only being incompetent at his job, he also butts in to bath matters? Quite the bothersome, old man.

“Use it to your heart’s content. The body soap is quite good too. I chose that as well.”

You’re butting in too much, old man!!

The bath management is probably being done by a commoner so I ended up feeling pity for him.

Even if he’s an incompetent noble, a commoner can’t say much to him.

But still, the old man’s choice isn’t bad. It is certainly a pretty good shampoo.

“I see you are done cleaning your hair. How about it? Shall I wash your back?”

Old man, it is okay if you just let me be....

“.....Yes, please.”

But, I would still like it so I will gladly accept.

Using his favourite soap luxuriously, he cleaned my back.

It is a little creepy how eager he is about this though.

“Ah, after you’re done washing my back, please let me wash yours. Oh and just normal cleaning will do. It’s always like that after all.”

“Now, there’s no need to be impatient. Not like anybody will come anytime soon.”

Eh, will nobody come for a while then? The castle’s job seems to be quite hectic. Although this old man seems to have all the time in the world.

“Did you come to the castle for a job?”

“Ah, no, I came to meet a friend. And so he told me to stay for a while, which I

am grateful for.”

“I see. Make yourself at home.”

Is it just me or is this old man quite pompous?

He talks as if he owns the castle.

I wonder if he’s actually at a high position here.

If that’s the case, then this old man is a earnest, competent, old man. I am sorry, I will revise my judgement.

“When will the other people start coming in, sir?”

“Nn, well, no one will come in for at least an hour.”

“Ah, really? Then I guess it will be fine if I take my time.”

“Yeah. It is rare so, you could also cover yourself with soap and slide from one side to another.”

Old maaaannnn!!! Why are you thinking of the same things as me?!!

For someone as old as you, I would normally think you stopped thinking about stuff like that.

“Haha, surely you jest.”

“It is no joke. There are no people here at this time so I do it when stress piles up.”

“What do you do?!?..... Well, I did think of doing the same thing just a while ago.”

“I see! Then we have no choice but to do it!”

We have no choice?! It is okay to not do it too, right?! Right?!

“Now that it’s settled, red-haired boy, quickly clean my back as well.”

“Understood. Forgive me if I sound a bit rude but, while sliding like that might be barely permissible for my age, it probably quite isn’t for yours.”

“It is okay. Nobody will come for a while anyway. If you just don’t say

anything, it will not enter anyone's ear. If it gets leaked, then it will be you."

"I won't say anything. I am also doing it after all."

While calming the old man as he went 'Quick, quick!', I finished cleaning his back. Old man, you are looking too forward to this!

After having his back cleaned, the old man went to a corner of the bath without covering his body with soap.

He isn't even soaked in soap. No matter how slippery the bath may be, in that condition you will just get your skin damaged.

Then the old man went on and touched the wall somewhere, making a click noise.

Then he took a tile off, revealing a space with various stuff in it like sake.

"My wife has forbidden me from drinking so when I want to drink, I come here."

This old man is no good.

"Here, I also have my favourite soap. It is a cheap one being sold at the city but, as far as I have tested, this one is the easiest to slide with."

No good, this old man really is no good. Using the castles facilities for his own purpose. Even for something not good.

"Tested, you say... how long have you been doing this?"

"Well, that is of course since I was as old as you. Strangely enough, I wasn't that interested as a child."

I didn't ask about all that. I wasn't even asking, I was just baffled! I don't want to hear stories from your youth!

"Listen well, this is a word of advice from your senpai."

".....Yes."

"Don't use a low amount thinking it is waste, okay? Your stomach will wear out. You won't be able to show your stomach in front of women for a while. It's cheap anyway so use it as much as you want."

I feel stupid for raising my expectations..

I wonder if he had such experiences before....

“Alright, it looks like you have thoroughly soaked yourself. Next, we also spill it on our course. If these are not soaked you might also cut your stomach. It hurts quite a lot.”

“How serious are you about this?!! The people coming afterwards will slip and hurt their head!”

“Don’t mind that. Listen, you can do a curve but I would advise not to since you’re a beginner. For today, let’s do a straight line.”

“I just wanted to lightly play around a little....”

“Now, you also make your course. I will use mine, after all.”

Together with the old man, we spilled soap all over the bath naked.

..... What am I doing? Really.... what am I doing? I won’t be able to show my face anymore if someone sees this.

“Course, done. Body, done. Fufufu, now, let’s go!”

Together with the old man, I went to one edge of the bath and got ready. Far ahead of me, I could see the other end. It would at least be 50 meters.

It made me think again, how humongous and luxurious this bath is. The people living in the castle can live such a wonderful life.

“Kick the wall properly, okay? Half-assed kicks won’t get you to the other side.”

“You too, old man. Just so you know, I have got it perfectly simulated on my mind.”

I ended up blurting old man but I guess it’s okay. We are kinda like comrades now anyway.

“Another advice, picture a penguin. Decrease the parts touching with the floor as much as you can. It will be a test of strength.”

What is this old man explaining to me all naked?

Try bending your back muscles like this, you will look like a complete pervert.

I already kinda feel it is too late though....

‘1, 2, 3 and go!!’ saying that, we both kicked the wall with all we had.

I thought my kick was stronger but soon the old man went on ahead.

I didn’t bend my back and put only a part of stomach on the floor like the old man had advised.

But on the spur of the moment, I also threw away embarrassment and mimicked that form.

I kept on steadily accelerating. It seems like the old man’s form theory was perfect.

The other edge slowly became clear. It became clear but....

Hmm? Wait, I am not decelerating?!!

“Ahh-”

I was spreading my arms like a penguin so I couldn’t protect my head either. I directly hit the wall with my head.

It felt like my head would split open, my neck will break, and it hurts! What is this?! Old man, I reached the edge quite easily!

“Kaahh!! Ouccchhh!!”

When I looked at the old man, he was also writhing in pain holding his head.

He is stupid. I forgot that this old man was stupid.

Damn, if I did more simply I could had more fun too.

Being hooked in by the old man, I ended up doing it too well.

“So, how is it? Are you liking the royal castle?”

“No, I can’t just go like ‘Ah, yes it is pretty nice, isn’t it?’ when you ask at a

timing like this.”

“I guess that’s true.”

After hurting my head with the old man, we entered the bath.

He also brought out his hidden sake.

I didn’t really want to drink it but it is quite expensive so I decided on having one sip.

“Ah, delicious.”

“Right? Nahhaha, I understand you’re still young. Here, I will pour you some, so drink more.”

“Oh, thank you.”

And like this, we kept drinking in the hot bath till we became like boiled octopuses.

It was the moment I had made a good friend in crime.

He said to tell him if something troubled me in the royal castle but I honestly don’t feel like asking him.... I will again be swallowed up in something weird.

Well, we could do it again at the bath. The sake was delicious too.

锻治職人を目指す

没落予定なので、



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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 18

After finishing my bath, I wore the substitute clothes which were probably made with the best materials and followed the attendant to where Rahsa was.

I don't have the slightest idea about where we were in the castle but the attendant had it all covered. I was escorted into the living room, where Rahsa sat comfortably, drinking tea, and Iris, who was blown away by the luxury of the room.

"Iris! I am glad. I thought you were kidnapped by prince Arch."

"He isn't that much of a dangerous person. But I guess it is true that I was saved by prince Rahsa. At that rate, he was going to make me stay at a very luxurious room where only royalties stay."

So he really planned on doing it, that prince....

"Seriously, brother doesn't know his limits so it's troubling. I decided to look after Iris-san as long as she is in the castle. I can't leave her to brother. There's no way she would feel comfortable in a room like that. Brother could have at least thought of that much."

You tried to do the same thing to me too, Rahsa-kun. I guess they are related after all.

"I heard you wanted to work at the castle during the winter break, Iris-san. I shall make arrangements for it. When do you wish to start?"

"Nn, as soon as possible. Being in this room for free for a few more days would burst my sorry heart."

"Hahah, there's no need to think of such things. But even still, I shall prepare for it as soon as I can then. You could also be able to work from tomorrow."

"Really?! Ah, I am glad. Thank you, prince Rahsa. I am grateful to you as much as I am to Kururi. I will definitely, definitely return this favour!"

"You also don't really have to worry about that. Being of the same rank as Aniki itself is.. very much an honor."

He ended up blushing a little at the end there. Such a cutie.

"Iris-san, there's one thing I must apologize for. Since you will be working for us, I wanted to make you do something meaningful but as a condition for taking you back from my brother, he told me to definitely give you a work at the 6th floor of the castle."

"Hmm? No, I am completely fine with it. I am grateful as it is."

"The 6th floor of the castle isn't normally open to people. Publicly, this castle is built up to the 5th floor. I want to request you to not tell anyone about it since it is what you would call a secret floor where only a portion of the important people can enter. I definitely feel there must be some kind of a reason behind brother wanting you to work there but, could I still ask you to do it?"

So he really did it, that prince. I kinda was half-joking about it....

I wonder what kind of a person the king is.

Is he the type who would easily support his son's decisions?

I want to at least expect him to be very majestic. Be a king who doesn't even pay any attention to the sweet girl sweeping the floors!

"Being able to work at such an amazing place, it would be great. I am good at cleaning so leave it to me!"

"Having you say that lifts a heavy burden off of my chest. When you get tired, please do not forget to rest. Of course, I have planned off days as well."

"Yes!!"

Iris' determination is dazzling. I won't work, you know?

And it doesn't pain me in any way doing so. Free food? All you can eat? I am not ashamed of it. In fact, I am such a person who would even request desert on top of that!

"I am glad that you're fine with it, Iris-san. Aniki, how do you like our house?

It is pretty nice, isn't it? We had even hired the top designer to design the bathhouse."

"Ah, yes, it is pretty nice. That bath too, it is of the level which you would be lucky to even use once in your lifetime."

.....Although there was a weirdo there.

"I am glad you think of it that way. The baths in the Helan territory were the best. When I told my father of them, he was burning with passion to make an even better bath, so he even increased the quality of the hot water. If you, the hot spring god, say it is good, then it must have turned out pretty well."

Hot spring god? Me? Dear me, I had become a god before I even realized..... Would it be too much to ask if I wanted to be a bit more cooler god? I guess it is, huh.

"If you're not tired today, I would like to guide you through the capital. There are quite a lot of places I wanted to show you. Really, there are so many places!"

"Your feelings have reached me. I will probably be fine after a night's rest so, I guess I will count on you for tomorrow."

"Alright! Then it's settled. I think I am quite aware of the things you might like so you can look forward to it!"

Seeing Rahsa speak so happily of it even made me happy.

I probably won't find anyone else who would be this welcoming of me. I need to take good care of him.

After that, Rahsa, Iris, and I talked about different things and laughed together.

What drew my interest among them was the ghost stories Rahsa spoke about.

It looked like Iris was not so good at ghost related stuff so she shut her ears but I listened to all of it. And this.....

"Since the construction of this castle, it has been a few hundred years and during all these time, there have been various different dark incidents. Of course, since then it has been renovated and buildings have been added to it so

you might not get that feel anymore.”

“Hoho? Well, in nobles’ residences there numerous stories of the sort so, can I really expect something better here?”

“.....Ah-ahh, I can’t hear you”

Iris closed her eyes and shut her ears. I don’t think there is a need to close her eyes though.

From here on out, it will be among the two of us guys. It is completely fine if you add the indecent parts now.

“Then I shall talk about a certain woman’s episode today. A story about a waitress who looks really good in a white apron.”

As Rahsa snapped his fingers, all the lights in the room turned off and a candle on the table lit up.

“Heee!”

Iris, who is supposed have closed her eyes, let out a light shriek.

Wait, how did he do that just now?! What kind of a trick is it?! I am more interested in that!

“That woman is called Chauvier. She was a commoner but after getting a job at the castle, she was very earnest every day about working. The woman who looked nice and clean, worked diligently without asking for a luxury, had attracted everyone’s attention and became an idol-like existence in the castle.”

Gulp I could hear Iris’ throat. So you are listening?

“Chauvier’s existence became more and more known around the castle and the nobles had started to visit the dining hall where she worked. One of those nobles fell in love with Chauvier and confessed his love. She had been rejecting at first but lost to the man’s love and decided to answer to his feelings. Both of them were close in age and soon got caught up in the whirlwind of love and entered their own world....”

“Hiiiii.. haa-haa..”

You’re listening with all your heart, aren’t you? And this isn’t even the scary

part yet. Iris' appearance was too interesting I couldn't even properly pay attention to the story.

"But their happiness did not last long. The man with whom Chauvier fell in love with was from a family which was noble only in name and not wealth. And so the head of the family urged his son to marry a daughter of a wealthy merchant. A merchant who wants the name of the noble, and a noble who wants money. The arrangements had already been done and the man had no say in it. The two chose to break up as they had no choice. The man left the castle saying 'I will never forget about you.'. After that, Chauvier couldn't hold back her tears every night because of the sadness."

"Awawaawaaa"

Iris became pale and started shaking.

Why?! It is still not the scary part! Block your ears properly too!

"The two kept living their lives, having such a sad fate, and before one knew it, a few decades had passed. The man had children with the daughter of the merchant and was living happily in his own way. But one day, he suddenly remembered about the woman he loved long ago. Then the man went out to look for Chauvier. But, Chauvier was no longer in the dining hall...."

Did Chauvier-san die? Hmm? Is this a sad story?

"But the man didn't give up and searched for people who knew Chauvier all around the castle. But for some reason, when he mentioned that name, the people were afraid. Why? What happened to her? After asking around for a few days, he finally got the answer. He was told by a person who had a really menacing look- 'Chauvier... don't speak of that name. Something bad will happen'."

Iris started hyperventilating. Are you okay?! Won't it be better if just didn't listen?!

"He fell into despair. He realized that something must have happened to her. But even still, to not even speak of her name, is it some sort of a curse? He was also afraid but he couldn't stop until he knew the truth of the story. Suppressing his fear, he sought after the truth. Then he got to know.... about her completely

changed appearance.”

The story is entering its climax. Even I was a little on the edge now.

Iris... just let it go now.

I feel like, despite all she says, she might actually like this type of stories.

“.... Chauvier had married a big noble who had a really important job in the castle. She was now living in quite the luxury. Hearing the name Chauvier reminded her of her commoner days so it was forbidden. One would be punished if they had not called her marchioness. The people of lower status were too afraid of that and didn’t speak of her name. And he also heard from the surrounding that she had ended up laughing, even to the point tears came out, when she got to know that the noble she was dating was just a noble in name and did not have any wealth. The man, after knowing the truth, left the castle in silence....”

That is scary!! In a different meaning but, scary!!

I can’t sleep knowing women are so scary!!

.....Iris had already fainted. She probably didn’t even listen to the contents of the story and was probably done in by Rahsa’s tone and the room’s mood. Or rather, was it just me or did she look like she was having the most fun?

Because of listening to that weird story from Rahsa, I had difficulty falling asleep after going to bed.

And when I had finally fallen asleep, I was woken up. I heard a sound echo in the vast room.

And suddenly, I just remembered about Chauvier-san.

No, that isn’t even a ghost-related story. It was just a story of real-life scary things.

Even still, I timidly got up.

“Is someone there?”

Of course, there was no reply.

I am sure I locked the door with the key. I wonder if I am just strangely wary

because I am not used to this room.

But when I looked at the window, it was open.

This is bad, it really looks like someone is in here.

I guess stuff like this also happens in the royal castle.

There were no weapons in reach. This is bad. I let my guard down too much.

Should I call someone? They said they will come immediately.

But, I don't really want to make a big deal out of this.

Even if the other party has killing intent, if I just withstand the initial attack I will be able to deal with it.

Covering my body with magic just in case, I looked around the dark room.

Diagonally in my sight, about 5-6 meters away, I feel like someone is there behind the fat pillar.

I don't remember incurring anyone's wrath so soon after coming into the castle.

Just in case, I stuffed a pillow in my shirt and got off the bed.

"Come out already. Or else, leave."

"You did well noticing. I shall praise you for that."

Just as I had felt, there was someone behind the pillar. I had just predicted it and wasn't sure so when someone actually spoke out, I got goosebumps.

"What do you want? I don't remember doing anything which would bring about an assassination."

"Assassination? I don't plan on doing something so boring. What I want to do is, make love!"

Make love?! That is even more dangerous!!

"If that's the case, then I shall protect my virginity. I also have a weapon at hand, I shall break that neck of yours."

"I know you don't have a sword on you."

Guuu.... they know. That is quite a well-prepared attack.

More like, I don't remember doing anything which would make someone come at night to make love either.

....., Hmm? Could it be.... and also, that voice...

"Rail, is it?"

"Yep."

He came out giving a refreshing smile. Ahh, so annoying.

I was really cautious and even had a pillow in front of my stomach to fight.

This bastard, his pranks are going too far.

"What did you come to do so late at night?"

I didn't even feel like getting angry at this point so I just directly asked.

"To make love."

When I started shaking him grabbing his collars, he raised his hands and started to tell the truth.

"I meant to prank a little too but, assassination at night is also one of my specialties. But more importantly, Kururi-kun, you really are at interesting places during interesting times. The castle will get noisy from now but you being here would liven up the festival even more."

"Festival? I don't know what you're talking about but leave me out of it."

"That, I can't do. This time, I purposefully woke you up as a warning. I will tell you more about it gradually depending on the situation but, do enjoy your time while you can. You have the capital date with prince Rahsa tomorrow, right?"

"Date, you say... Well, it's okay either way. Wait, why do you know that?"

"I have approximate knowledge of many things. Well then, it is pretty late so I will be going now."

"And don't come again at this time. Start from there."

The annoying guy left.

I thought it was going to be a fun capital trip but now I am starting to feel it will turn into something bothersome.

Up till now, nothing quite good happened. I guess I will look forward to Rahsa's reception tomorrow.

锻治職人を目指す

没落予定なので、



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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 19

The day Rahsa said he would show me around the city had finally arrived. My body, as well as my mood, felt light from the morning.

I had breakfast with Rahsa and Iris.

The rectangular table was so long that if one were to sit on one long end, they would not even be able to see the face of the person on the other end. The food was set such that the three of us could easily reach them. Rahsa probably made it that way.

“The vegetables are so good. The city itself has developed so much that I had completely thought it would be really hard to acquire such fresh vegetables. But these are really tasty.”

“All these were grown in the garden. Aniki’s classmate, Eliza-san’s mother manages them.”

“Is that so? It’s a bit surprising. They are of such a high class that I had thought they would not be involved with farming their whole life.”

“Her father is very sagacious and very hard to approach but her mother is really sociable, you know? She is always very lively and had cared for me since I was a child.”

Oho, that is unexpected.

If I were to pick one, I would say Eliza falls into the fierce temperament category. And to think her mother was that kind of a person. So the warm side Eliza occasionally shows is the side she inherited from her mother, huh?

“I do want to meet her once, also to thank her for the vegetables.”

“Yes, please do meet her if the opportunity arises, she is very a nice person. Although, it might be a little hard finding her as she wanders around quite a bit.” Rahsa informed us with a smile.

It seems like he is quite fond of her.

"Ahem, bring the same stuff for me too." Prince Arch came into the room.

He cleared his throats as if to let us know of his presence and asked for the same breakfast we were having.

He sat down as well, at the very end of the table, making it hard to make out his face.

It looked so unnatural that it even made me feel embarrassed.

If you wanted to meet Iris, you could have just sat next to her.

Rahsa glanced at his brother's pitiable state, squinting his eyes and turned back towards me again and said, "Big brother normally has breakfast in his room." Rahsa informed me with a quiet voice. Even he understood his brother's miserable state.

"Let's let him be then."

"That would probably be the best."

With Rahsa's cooperation, we kept on pretending prince Arch was not there.

Iris was making a face which said 'Is that okay?' but it was. That person is really bothersome, after all.

"Oi, Rahsa. Pass the dressing beside you."

"There is one just beside you too, brother."

"It's that, you know, it is ecologically better to uhh, have one of each. You know, the capital is also noisy about trash these days too, right?"

Rahsa gave an annoyed look and again came close to me and said,

"He is quite annoying. Let's finish eating quickly and head out."

"Let's be a little more kind to him. His real intentions are completely leaking out but at least he is saying something logical for once."

"Aniki, you sure are kind."

Letting out a sigh, he told his real brother this time,

"Alright, then. I am bringing it to you."

"No, actually, since I am the one asking for, I should be the one to come get it."

Rahsa looked like he felt like throwing the bottle at his brother. I have known Prince Arch for some time now so I kind of get how he feels.

Even the tolerant Rahsa can easily become irritable when it comes to his brother, showing a few signs of anger here and there. Seeing that, I thought that having a sibling is nice.

"Oho? If it isn't Iris! The table is so big that I had not noticed. I did think that a lovely girl had joined us for breakfast today, though."

It isn't *that* big—the table. If he is saying that honestly then, really, I would recommend glasses for him.

"Prince Arch, is it possible your eyesight is a little bad?"

Iris asked, genuinely, concerned for him.

See, this is what happens when you try too hard. This is the perfect opportunity, why not take on the character of a person with bad eyesight?

"It is a bit blurry right after waking up, you see. But more importantly, it seems like you have work from today, right, Iris? As the place is a bit of a secret as Rahsa has probably informed you, there aren't many people who can guide you. If you are okay, I could do it. After all, I have been living in this castle since I was born."

"That is true. Then, can I request you?"

"Hahaha, I guess there would be no one other than me who could fulfill the needs. It would be a little work but it is a person's virtue to help a friend, after all."

You just want to guide her, don't you?

"For some reason, it seems to be quite a hard job for my brother. But for me, it is as simple as finishing a cup of tea, therefore, I shall guide you, Iris-san."

"Uh, it might be tough for the general people but for me, it is actually easier than squeezing a lemon on tea. And so, Rahsa, it would be easier for me to do it so I shall take up on it."

“Is that so? However, I did not point out the amount of tea. It is like finishing drinking just a bit of tea. Which is, even easier than squeezing a lemon.”

“Oho, but, that is the same for me. Actually, my lemon’s skin had also been peeled and it would be as easy as to breath to squeeze it, you see. Before, I purposefully did not say so far as it would be longer. In other words, it would be as easy as breathing for me so this won’t be a problem for me after all.”

What are these siblings even quarreling over?

It is fine either way. In fact, even the lady attendant standing behind was making a face like ‘Hmm? Then shall I guide her?’.

“Besides, Rahsa, are you not making your precious friend wait? Kururi-kun is the person who will inherit the Helan territory in the future. He will become a person who will be indispensable to this country. To make such a person wait is the same as hurting the national interest. Right? Isn’t that right, Kururi?”

His stare is strong! Too strong!

Your pupils are getting bigger! It is the look a hunter gives his prey!

“Rahsa, let’s let prince Arch guide Iris, alright? I want to go around the city soon too.”

“Riiightt? It is not good to make a friend wait. Rahsa, here I will give you some pocket money. How about you two go and happily eat some snacks or something with this?”

“Haa... I have already received allowance from mother, so that is fine. Also, I can’t make him eat just some snacks after all the trouble he has been through to get here. I understand. But, Iris-san has come to work so just don’t be a hindrance to her.”

“I see, I see. Don’t get into accidents.”

As if he was satisfied of his victory, the prince’s composure returned.

Beside us, Iris, who had been watching from the start, had also been relieved.

“Then, prince Arch, I am really grateful. I can start right away so you can start guiding me whenever you feel like it.”

“Oh, but, it is fine relaxing for a while more. Right, about 20 more minutes...”

Rahsa let out yet another sigh and we left the room together.

There was something I was a little curious about, so I asked Rahsa, “Did you understand what that 20 minute exactly meant?”

“It is the time my father, the king, enters his office.”

.....Silence fell upon us.

“There have been a ton of tiring things right from the morning but let’s remove all that from our minds and have fun.”

“Let’s do that. I was tired too.”

By Rahsa’s guidance, we came outside the castle. We were still inside the walls, so I was wondering if it was the courtyard.

A little noise came from afar and soon a white horse appeared, pulling a carriage behind it.

“This is Utsuma. We always have her groomed. She moves steadily.”

The horse wasn’t the only amazing thing.

The interiors of the carriage were completely different from the one I came to capital in.

It is quite heavy so it probably can’t be used for large journeys but it is just perfect for one day.

“I have a plan made for today but there is also time in between. If you have some place you want to go to, we can prioritize that.”

“Not any in particular. After all, it seems like my friend, Rahsa, has prepared a sightseeing plan.”

“You can look forward to that.”

The carriage started moving.

When we came to that big gate, again it was opened. Thank you for the work.

The carriage ran around the capital for awhile.

The view I saw from the window was magnificent. There were people everywhere.

I could see the marketplace far in the distance but it seemed to be far more crowded. It was so lively that I thought that our moods would also be uplifted if we went there.

“Aniki, we will reach there soon.”

“Oho. Just seeing the scenery like this is pretty fun in itself.”

“It is a bit sad how it does not seem like much when you get used to it. Then, let’s prepare to get off.”

The first place Rahsa took me to was an area where magic gem shops were lined up.

It is close to the place the nobles lived in.

Magic gems are pretty expensive and the demand is mainly from the nobles, so the place was fitting of that.

“Yep, I like it!”

“Fufu, I thought you would like it.”

There are no magic gem shops in the Helan territory.

I had seen them a few times and in books and I always felt a desire for them.

I am not the type to be greedy but I really had a strong urge to spend.

Worst case, it was okay even if I did not buy anything. But, I needed to look around all the shops!

I wondered if this feeling was similar to how girls felt when window shopping.

“Rahsa, let’s go. Where shall we start?”

“We have all the time in the world. Let’s look at all of them.”

“Right? You sure know your stuff.”

We went to the shop which was closest to us first. The location was probably good as the shop was prospering and there were a lot of employees.

I started looking at the goods. Beside each of the gems, there was an

explanation note with description of what kind of magic was in it, its manufacturer, etc— all of which were written in detail.

Unfortunately, they were all very expensive.

I had the money. If I wanted to, I could buy a few but as I was not used to buying expensive goods, I could not make up my mind.

And besides, all of them seem to be lacking something decisive.

“There is no need to hurry. Let’s look around other shops as well.”

As expected from the city boy Rahsa, he was full of composure. Is it just my imagination, or does he seem to be glowing a little? He is really reliable.

“Won’t you buy any, Rahsa?”

“I can come here anytime, so I could buy when I need to.”

“I see. That’s true.”

I wondered if there were any sales depending on the season.

It was a bit embarrassing so I decided not to ask. After all, there did not seem to be any customer there who would care about that.

After that, we went around looking at a few other shops. Yep, if one were to ask me if I wanted them or not, I would say I did want them but still, they seemed to be lacking something.

I just ended up hesitating when I thought about the price.

“Aniki, let’s go there next. I am sure you will like it.”

“Nn?”

As if he was expecting it from the start, we started moving towards the shop Rahsa pointed at.

Is there something different about it?

“This shop, can make custom gems. Moreover, the prices are lower than the other shops. And because of that, the design is inferior to the ready made ones, though. Since it is Aniki, I thought you would give functionality more importance.”

“Yep, I like it!”

Rahsa, you sure know it! That is it!

Won’t you come to our house as an adopted child?

When I got into the shop, I could certainly feel that the shop status was a bit lower than the others.

But this feeling, as if the shop was filled with magic gems, I kinda liked that.

“Prince Rahsa, thank you for coming again.”

A thin man with a curved back greeted Rahsa.

“Actually, it is also one of my favourite shops too. I also value functionality, you see.”

“I see, I see.”

Yep, yep, I can fundamentally relate with Rahsa. I was convinced that our likes and dislikes would be pretty similar too.

“So, what brings you here today?”

“Today, I brought my Aniki. Please make a magic gem worthy of Aniki.”

“I see. He is a... little peculiar of a customer.”

Declaring your customers to be peculiar out of the blue like that?! That is too rude. He can’t complain even if I cut him down here....

“Ahh, Aniki, don’t be offended by him. He is a holder of an odd kind of eye, you see— well, he has a bit of an odd personality too, though....”

“No, I don’t mind. What do you mean by an odd kind of eye?”

“Yes, he can see the special characteristics of magic within a person.”

A man who has eyes which can see the characteristics of magic within a person... What is with that ability? It is exactly what someone of our age would yearn for!

It is too cool!

“It is not that great of a thing. I just understand the traits a bit better, you see. Prince Rahsa’s magic is quite rare too but this red-haired customer’s magic.. I

have never seen anything like it.”

.....Is it okay to believe this guy?

“Rahsa, would he take any additional fees or something?”

“Please rest assured. He is probably not doing such suspicious business.”

“Hoho, I can hear you. I won’t take any additional fees so won’t you hear me out? You seem to have something very rare so it won’t harm you to know of it, at least.”

Oh, so it’s free? Then I guess I will have him look at me.

“Don’t be so clearly relieved, Aniki. There is nothing quite free, right?”

“I-Is that so?! Then, I guess I will pay a little. Just a little.”

“Well, that is your wish. Red-haired customer, can I have your name?”

“Kururi Helan.”

My likes are peaceful stuff.

“Kururi Helan-dono, if I were to describe your magic in one word, it would be vortex. And a really, really big, enormous vortex at that as well.”

“Vortex?”

“Vortex....”

It is that thing which spins round and round, right? The stuff which takes in other stuff. Ah, when I imagine it like that, it is a bit scary.

“It is a ‘vortex’. Your magic has the characteristic to take in other people’s magic and make it your own. If you had malicious intent, you could possibly take in prince Rahsa’s magic as well.”

Possibly? Saying something so irresponsible!

Saying something like that so casually, something which could harm the royalty—my head could go flying, you know?!

“Aniki, you can do something so amazing?!”

“No, no, I can’t! I feel like I am being falsely accused!”

“But the owner certainly has the eyes to see the characteristics of magic. The people I have made him see till now, none of them were a miss.”

Really?! A person of remarkable ability?!

“Now, now, don’t panic. I just said if you had any malicious intent. Besides, as far as I can see, you don’t realize it yourself. Kururi-dono, have you had any experiences where you could have realized that you were something different from others? For example, the magic one uses... to take it in....”

I do! I actually do though!

In fact, it was just recently!

It is timed so well that I can’t really laugh it off!

“.....No.”

“You do, don’t you? Aniki, there is no need to hide it. I had known you were amazing since I had met you but isn’t this just proving that? Please, be proud of yourself.”

Be proud?But...

“I could possibly suck up your magic just being beside you, you know? A person might even die if they are running low on magic..... It is definitely a dangerous thing.”

“I know that you won’t do such a thing. If you use your powers justly, in Helan territory, no, in the whole country, you could leave your name in history. You have that big of a power, you know?”

....You are disagreeing too much... That makes me blush.

See? The owner is also shaking his head saying he did not say that much.

“If you are speaking so high of it, I will try not to take it negatively. But, there is no need to publicly announce it. Now then, we came to buy magic gems today. Owner, please prepare a magic gem for me.”

“Yes, please wait for a moment.”

While the owner had withdrawn to the back, I asked Rahsa of his magic characteristics.

“Mine is quite common. But, it seems to be more see-through than the normal magic.”

“See-through?”

It kinda fits his image...

“Not just see-through. It is completely transparent. Prince Rahsa’s magic is colorless and transparent—in other words, it can change as it likes.” the owner said coming back.

Magic which can change as it likes.... Isn’t that super cool?!

“When prince Rahsa walks on the road, all of the things there influence his magic. I thought it changed to a rather distorted way recently but... so this is why.”

Did you just look at me now?! You looked at me and agreed on the source of the distortion, didn’t you?!

Come out! Let’s duel!

“However, I had prince Rahsa carry the magic gem which repels other magic. If he comes in contact with someone with malicious intent, not only will it affect him, it will also affect his magic. So, if such a person comes close, the magic gem will unveil its power. If that gem is not denying you, Kururi-dono, then you don’t seem to be affecting him in a bad way.”

Is that so?

“Kururi-dono, I have prepared this for you. I am sorry it is a ready-made good even though we are a custom-made store.”

“What? I came for custom too.”

“You have a very unique magic so I have no choice. If you were a commoner, I could have also had some fun making custom gems.”

It seems the day we have the duel is closing in.

“This is the magic gem which has a lot of the natural magic of Garungal mountain in it. As it is natural magic, there are also special effects.”

“Then I am fine.”

“Don’t say that. Your ‘vortex’ is already quite big but it can still grow even bigger. If it grows even bigger, it might need even more magic. If your body can’t fulfill that need, it might also take in others’ magic. If that happens, an end nobody would want will fall upon you.”

“That is troubling.”

“And so, to prevent it from rampaging against your will, if you just carry this with you, it will be fine. It will not get empty anytime soon.”

“.....How much?

“About as much it would take to build a house. As it is quite hard to get.”

“Even if you say a house... there are all kinds of houses. Even in my Helan territory, as the population is increasing, we are providing cheap houses in the new residential area and if one were to look, they could find quite cheap houses around the world.”

“If you don’t want it, then it’s okay.”

“I will take it.....”

It is expensive but after he said all that, I can’t not buy it.

I have no other choice, I shall earn the amount I used by making more swords.

It will be fine if I just earn again! Right?

Forcing my body, which was denying to pay the money, I paid almost all of the money I had brought.

After I paid, the owner gave me a bracelet-shaped magic gem.

It was orange and looked as if lava was stored inside.

As it was quite expensive, I carefully wore it on my neck.

I should be careful not to damage it.

As we were done, we left the store and returned to the carriage.

“Sorry, making you do somewhat expensive shopping. I had forgotten that you are not the type to buy things which are too expensive.”

Please don’t apologize. I feel embarrassed. I wonder if I should use more

money like a noble? To not lose face when time comes.

“With this, even if temporary, the chances of me hurting you have disappeared, right? Then it was pretty cheap.”

“Aniki..... Aniki, I love you!!”

锻治職人を目指す

没落予定なので、



著
CK
かわく

Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 20

A few days had passed since Rahsa showed me around the city.

The magic gem was getting accustomed to my body. In a fashion sense.

Rahsa has been treating me really well. So well that I almost never feel bored these days.

However, I am alone today.

Rahsa, even at his young age, is already quite busy.

He went to the capital's royal art gallery for official business today.

It seems like he will have to deal with people who just love money, while listening to artistic songs there.

I also wanted to go but was stopped by Rahsa, as it appears that today's meeting was not exclusively for art. He even promised to take me later, if I wanted.

And as such, I am have all the time in the world today.

He had told me that it was okay to do as I please in the castle but I didn't quite know the extent of that freedom. I do know that it would be pretty bad to be wandering around naked, though....

Iris was busy with work and I could not even meet her as the place was a secret.

The things I can do alone are very much limited.

And even if I happen to find prince Arch, I don't know what I would do with him.

At times like these, I used to smith at the academy.

It was practically a habit at that point—as natural as waking up and washing one's face.

But, there probably isn't a place like that in the royal castle... It isn't really needed in the first place, too...

“Alright, I guess I will go meet Eliza’s mother.”

I told that to the capable attendant.

She prepares stuff within 3 minutes of asking her. A mysterious lady who uses *Anywhere Door* and even surprised me on the first day.

“Yes, I do not mind but that person is really unpredictable. Only this, I am not sure if we can meet her or not.”

What kind of a person is she? I kinda end up imagining a woman who is free and uncontrolled.

“The king, Tsukimi-sama and Rahsa-sama’s elder sister, Maria-sama, these three people are called the ‘*Travellers*’. They are always gone before one can realize it. At this point, their beautiful art of disappearing can be considered to be a talent in itself.”

“*Travellers*...”

To think 3 really important people like them are doing that... I can feel the worries of those around them.

—Wait, the king?! You shouldn’t be doing that!!

“If that’s the case, then I guess I will just wander around the castle alone... By the way, is it okay if I asked your name?”

“Supatifila. I had thought there was no need for you to remember my name and as such I didn’t introduce myself. My apologies.”

“No, it’s not something you need to apologize for. More importantly, Supatifila-san, you can rest today. I will just wander around the castle.”

“I can not do that. I have been told by prince Rahsa to be of use to you.”

“You are of use. Besides, he asked you to listen to my requests, right? I am requesting you to rest for today.”

“If that’s the case... Then I can go buy ‘*Lovey-dovey Cafe Volume 2 Storm Arc*’ without any constraint. Today is the release date and I had wanted to go.”

Saying that, Supatifila-san disappeared.

She is pretty capable but to think she had such desires inside. Don’t judge a

book by its cover, eh?

Or rather, she disappeared so fast that I want to entitle her a *Traveller* too...

Leaving the room I had been in, I started walking down the vast corridor.

It was so big that I sometimes forgot that I was inside a building.

Having walked even further from there, I eventually ended up in a space so big, nothing could be seen in the distance.

Walking out to the area where sun was shining, I could see the town below.

As the castle was pretty high up, and I was on the 4th floor, the view was amazing.

There should be no way the sound would come this far but when I looked at the distance, towards the lively part of the city, I felt like I could also hear it.

“The view here is wonderful, isn’t it?”

Before I had realized, a good-looking, blonde-haired, old man was standing behind me.

It was the weird old man who I met in the bath the other day. We are comrades who slid 50 metres together and hit our heads.

I would have liked to not meet him anymore but we seem to have met in quite the unexpected place.

“Yes, one can enjoy an unbroken view of the city.”

“It’s one of my favourite places. Today, it’s sunny and wonderful but on rainy days or snowy days, the view can be a thing to behold.”

“I see.”

Old man, you have been coming here on rainy days and snowy days? I wonder if he is actually doing his work...

Certainly, from what I have heard in the bath, he seems to be someone important who handles the business related stuff.

“It has not been put to practical use yet but this townscape was built skillfully to protect it from foreign enemies. Actually, I had also ordered to make this too.

It is being done even now.”

And for a while, I was being told how exactly he was making it to protect the town from enemies or intruders.

Is the old man perhaps a famous minister? It does not seem like he does business stuff anymore.

“Is it really fine telling me all that? It sounds pretty important.”

“No matter, I have not really revealed my trump card and besides, you are also part of this country, in fact, the person who will be looking after the Helan territory at that. I can’t think of any harm coming from telling you.”

“But you never know, I might just be an idiot who thoughtlessly spills it to the surrounding.”

“If that’s so then I am the bigger idiot for telling you such a matter. Well, I told you because I think you are not stupid. There isn’t really an important reason for this, I just felt like it. It is not something you should worry about.”

“Hmmm.”

The old man’s city building talk was very logical and I had fun listening to it.

I am sure he is a clever person but whenever I recall the bath incident, I can’t completely deny that he has no stupidity in him. No, he definitely has more stupidity.

“Well, let’s stop with the gossip. Actually, I have a much more important talk with you.”

A much more important talk.

A talk which is even more important than the capital’s military affairs.....? I am not really well-informed, so I can’t really imagine what it can be.

Not letting him sense my stiffness, I waited for him to speak.

“It happened quite recently but... there is a pretty girl in the castle.”

“.....”

Words won’t come out.

I wonder what kind of face I am making now...

“I didn’t really notice much at first but after looking at her a few times, I thought, I would like such a pretty girl as my son’s bride. Such a parental love is surging within me.”

“Weren’t you having some really praiseworthy talk a while ago? What happened suddenly? There is a cute girl in the castle? What are you, a guy going through puberty?”

“No, I have already dedicated my heart to my wife. I would not fall in love. But, it would be a waste to let such a pretty girl go. I also love my son like any father would. And so, if that girl is okay with it, I want her to marry my son.”

“Haaa—I feel stupid for getting tense. I probably see pretty girls once every 10 seconds in this castle—what happened now?”

“Once every 10 seconds?! I am jealous.. I have become so accustomed to the lifestyle here that my eyes have put on weight. Recently, only on good days do I see a cute girl once a day.”

I don’t want to know... I am absolutely not interested in your likes and dislikes, old man.

“But you see, after having seen this girl for a few times, I feel like my young heart has been resurrected. That my withered leaves are again starting to glow green. And so, I also hear that my son is quite unfamiliar in this field and I haven’t really done for him much so I thought it would be nice if I could be of use to him in this.”

I could feel how much the old man loves his son.

But, BUT, why tell me? We are just comrades who washed each others backs....

Uwah, we actually watched each others backs... I guess we are not strangers anymore.

“Your son, how old is he? Also, that beautiful girl, too.”

“Both of them are probably the same age as you. It would be reassuring if you were to help.”

"Well, if it's just a little, then it's okay with me. But, love affairs are mostly bothersome, are you okay with that?"

"I am fine. If push comes to shove, one can always make a run for it. I am good at running away, you see."

Is that okay, old man? Is that really okay, old man?

I am not really that good at running away, you know. This is away for me, too.

"Alright, I will guide you to that girl. You must not remember the path we take from now. No, it is okay for you to remember but you must not reveal it to anyone. Alright? Otherwise I will get angry."

I thought 'why go through this path then if you might get angry?' but I decided to nod and follow along.

After that, we followed a complex route and climbed two stairs.

I had no idea where in the castle I was but I was sure of the fact that I had rose two floors.

Hmm? Isn't this supposed to be the secret floor? Where only important people can enter....?

"Umm, isn't this bad?"

"We might get yelled at if we are discovered."

"Even if you are fine, I might get more severe punishment, you know!?"

"Well, don't worry. If you just walk confidently, no one will realize you are an oddball."

I am not an oddball. YOU are the oddball.

"Uh-oh, stop. After this curve, the girl will be there."

"Ehh, already?!"

"Yes, she is working so it is hard to talk to her. You, how about pretending you forgot the way and asking her?"

"After coming all the way to this *secret floor* and saying 'Oh, I forgot the way', that would be too suspicious, wouldn't it?! It wouldn't be weird if she were to

shout right that moment.”

“I guess that is also true. Well, for now, try peeking. You might fall in love too.”

That cute?

Handing over my position to the old man, I peeked with my face out to look at the girl.

I captured a beautiful girl in sight.

Wearing the castle-exclusive employee uniform, she was courteously sweeping the floor.....

Hmmm? I know her, though.. I really, *really*, know her, though?!

Iris, you have been caught among the many beautiful women in the castle!

This old man wants to have you as his son’s bride! Run!

Withdrawning my face back from the corner, I faced the old man again.

“So? Cute, right?”

“Cute, yes. But, I will have to say no. Not her.”

“Why is that?”

“Hmm, I am sorry for your son but not her.”

“And you mean?”

The old man was wearing a disappointed look but I must tell him this truth. Before he goes in too deep and gets hurt.

“The girl, her name is Iris and, as you can see, she is pretty. There are probably many men aiming for her but, believe me when I say this, the *prince* also likes her.”

“Prince? Which one?”

“Arch prince. If one were to compete with that handsome prodigy, they will probably face some tough situations. It is very nice to think of one’s son but this might lead to your son getting hurt.”

“Arch.... I see, if that’s the case, then I shall back out.”

He actually gave up quite easily.

He might be desperately trying to hide how disappointed he is.

He has an unexpectedly kind, resolute side to him. I guess, I will be a little more kind to him the next time I meet him.

Escaping the secret floor where my heart wouldn't stop thumping, I came back to the place we were in before with the old man.

"Thanks to you, I got to know something very important."

"No, I am sorry I could not be of help."

"That is not true. I have become indebted to you two times now. The next time we meet, I want to pay you back."

"It's fine, it was not a big deal anyway."

"Is that so? Well, I guess if you say that...."

It's not like I would be happy receiving something from the old man, anyway.

"Well then, till next time."

"Right. If something is troubling you, come find me anytime."

Parting from the old man, I returned to my room.

After that, I spent the remaining day reading.

In the end, I could not meet Rahsa after he had returned from his meeting that day.

Before going to sleep, I was told by the lady in charge of cleaning that I had something in my pocket.

I took it out.

It was a silver pocket watch. There was an eagle mark on the front. I felt like I had seen it somewhere before.

Why is such a thing in my pocket? It is not even mine in the first place.

Shutting it inside the drawer, I decided to hit the sack for the day.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 21

“This was found in my pocket yesterday but... it’s not mine so does it belong to you, Rahsa?”

During breakfast, I showed the silver pocket watch to Rahsa, which was delivered to me at night.

The person in charge of laundry found it and brought it to me as soon as possible as it looked quite expensive. It was made of silver and there was an elaborately curved eagle mark on the cap.

“Bleughh!!”

Apparently it was so shocking that Rahsa ended up spitting the consomme soup he was having.

The soup spilled on the table napkin and the attendants hurriedly rushed over to wipe it off.

“I am sorry. I will clean the rest so can you excuse us for a while?”

Listening to Rahsa’s request, the 4 attendants left the room.

Him being that surprised just now and making everyone leave the room.... Did I perhaps pick up something bad?

“Aniki, I would like to ask you to forget about it but since you have already seen it, I will explain, okay? Uh, before that.”

Rahsa searched in his pocket and carefully brought out a silver pocket watch. The mark on the cap was different but they were of the same shape.

“I am glad. Looks like it is not mine. This pocket watch, it is only held by a very select few important individuals of this country. They have been asked to value it next to their lives so to think there is one who dropped it.... I can’t really say what it is in detail but if you want, you could look inside. The name of the person who dropped it should be curved inside.”

Rahsa muttered with a silent sad voice, ‘It is probably elder sister but....’.

Rahsa's elder sister is.. Maria-sama, if I am not wrong. I had heard she is a very sweet lady but judging from Rahsa's worried state, it does not seem like she is too careful.

“.....Kururi Helan is curved inside...”

“Bleughhh!!”

He was about to drink the consomme soup to calm down a little but again, ended up spitting it out. The napkin also seems to be reaching its limits, taking the soup head on the second time in one day.

“Ca-can I have a look?”

“Hoi.”

As I threw it to him, he panickedly stopped it with his whole body.

“You must not throw it!”

“Ah, yes.”

I made him angry.

Still a bit panicky, Rahsa checked the watch in detail. It is somewhat similar to Iris' eyes when she appraises magic stones.

“.....It is real. Exactly, when....?”

“It was in my pocket, said the diligent laundry person when they delivered it to me yesterday night.”

“Hmm, you have not received any explanation then. Hmm.... hmmmmmm.... I don't know if it is okay for me to talk about this....”

‘Is it that important?’

“Yes!”

After racking his brain for a while, Rahsa turned to face me, looking into my eyes as if he had made up his mind.

“The things I am going to say now, you must not, ever, tell anyone. Even Aniki is not an exception to this.”

“.....Yes.”

“Then, I shall talk about it. This pocket watch, the only one who can issue the creation of it is this country’s top... The king.”

An evil thought — ‘I wonder how much it could be exchanged for?’ had come up in my mind for a moment but I deleted it.

“I do not know why the king has made you hold this. You have not met him, have you?”

“I have not.”

I can say that much for sure.

“Well, my father is... an odd person so I guess it might be better to not think too deeply about it. What’s important is that you are the one holding that watch now, Aniki. If you were not told anything, then I think I was meant to tell it to you.”

I kinda feel like it was turning into quite a worrying conversation. If you were to ask me, I would say I was more excited about being taken to the ice skating place today. I happened to hear that there are a lot of pretty people there.

“This exhibits power during Kudan kingdom’s emergency situations. The king entrusts it to people he trusts to save the country during its disorder. This is your social status’ evidence and with it, you can get money, and even mobilize the army. It is like a mass of special privilege.”

“During peaceful times?”

“....It is the same as a boondoggle.”

“Ah.”

“What are you getting disappointed for....? Maybe it was granted to you for some achievement in the Helan territory or something. Aniki, it might be a burden but will you not keep it with you for me?”

“Yes, since I did receive it, I have no choice. I will keep it. It does not seem like something to show off to people either so I will just keep it secretly. I still do not think I can do much even in emergency situations...”

“That is not true. Surely, we will see results of the king’s judgements to be correct.”

I kinda felt like I was promoted or something.

It was not a bad feeling.

It means I was acknowledged by the king, right? That is a good thing.

But, exactly what did he see in me? Or rather, where is he even watching me from?

The king — full of mysteries.

“Ah, it is turning into a snow storm outside.”

Before I realized, the little snowfall had turned into a blizzard outside.

We could also have a snowball fight but the wind was so strong that I felt like the trajectory might change so much that they would become magic balls.

“I guess the skating is suspended, then....?”

“It is unfortunate but I guess we can’t help it. If you would like, why not visit the knight barracks? They have been quite noisy to bring you to them for a while.”

“Eh? Will I get the hell beat out of me?”

“Of course not, they are welcoming you. It is not a very clean place so I did not really want to guide you there but since our circumstances have become like this, if I do not bring you to them, they will get even noisier later.”

“I see. Will I be thanked for the swords or something?”

“I don’t quite think they are such conscientious people but I guess you could look forward to it a bit.”

And thus, we had a change of plans. From cute girls skating to dirty men’s office.

The knights seem to be in a different building inside of the wall. It seems like the important knights get a place in the castle but unfortunately, that is only for a very select few.

I also hear it is quite the severe road if one is not skilled or from a prestigious family.

I wonder if my friend, Vain too, would have come here if things went smoothly. No, surely would have. While having such thoughts, I looked up at the knights barracks.

I could hear a fussy voice from inside.

I guess it is impossible for a place with so many men to be quiet.

“Ah–prince.”

As we entered the building, a young men noticed the prince. He was about 20 years old. Definitely looked older than me.

“What have you come for, prince?”

“You people were so noisy about me coming, and so I came.”

“Hmm? That means, that red-haired person over there is Kururi Helan-san?”

“Yes, my Aniki, Kururi Helan-san.”

“Uuuooooohhhh! Are you serious?! Seriously?! He seriously came?!”

As he started making an uproar, the other people who had been relaxing inside came out one by one.

‘Which one?! ‘That red-haired one.’ ‘Really?!’ ‘Really not what I expected.’ ‘Isn’t he too young?’ ‘Imposter?’ ‘Possible.’ ‘An imposter the prince prepared.’ ‘It’s a fraud, a fraud.’

Saying anything you want to say... This isn’t a show! Be gone!

“Everyone, calm down! First, I shall talk.”

Dividing the crowd, a woman came forward. The impression I got from her and the sword on her waist, the one that I had made — If I were to judge from this, is it the woman Jeremy-senpai’s brother fell in love with? What was her name again?

“I am Mady. This sword I am carrying on my waist is the one you made. It is excellent — so much that it is of the level of a famous sword. Everyone was spreading rumors of how highly skilled you were, you see, and so the building’s hot topic was you. So much that it came to this situation.”

“Well, thank you.”

By this situation, does she mean almost all of the knights gathering together so much that their skin is touching? They certainly seem to be quite passionate about swords.

If I remember correctly, Mady-san is the one Jeremy-senpai's brother is in love with.

"And so, first, I want to say this as the representative... Could you make another sword?"

'Haaa?!' 'I am first!!' 'If it's money, I have a lot!' 'Make one for me too!' 'Idioooott!' 'you masculine woman!!'

Looks like she couldn't let the last one go, and punched that guy flying.

Rahsa walked forward and stood in front of them.

"I am sorry but Aniki is on a vacation now. He won't be accepting job requests. Today too, I just brought him because you people were being too bothersome. Think yourselves lucky you got to see him. Aniki is only my Aniki."

'That's unfair!' 'Rotten prince!' 'Your face is pretty but you are evil!' 'Childish! Childish!' 'Raise our pays!'

Oi, the last one isn't even related to Rahsa!

Say that to someone else. And all of you others, Rahsa is pretty scary when he is not kind, you know!?

"Now then, Aniki, we have fulfilled our obligation. Let's go back and have sweets or something."

"Ah-wait!"

Mady-san stopped us.

She looked as if she had just remembered something.

"That's right, Kururi Helan-san, if it is okay, please meet with our leader. Leader Rotto has been wanting to meet you. He isn't the type to meet people normally, that person.... It is quite rare so.. Well I have told you. It's up to you, whether you want to meet him or not."

Leader Rotto...

That's Vain's family name. They are a family of knights, so I guess it is his father.

Why would he want to see me?

'Deceiving my precious son!!' – will he come chopping me yelling that, I wondered.....

If that's so, then I don't want to go. Ah, my thoughts are starting to get extreme.

"I know the knight leader's room so if you feel like going, I can guide you."

Yep, I was thinking about it but if he guides me, maybe I can go? The leader probably won't do something too daring in front of the prince too.

".....I guess I will go."

The knight leader's room was on the first floor of the castle so we quickly arrived there. Before knocking the door, I felt a little nervous.

After knocking about 2 times, a rough voice from inside said ' Come in.'

His voice is similar to Vain's.... Or so I thought.

Immediately as I entered, I ended up leaking an 'Ah.'

It might have been taken as being rude but I could not help it.

I mean, he was so big! Unbelievably big! A giant! I will get eaten!

Vain was about 2 meters tall and had muscles like a bear but his dad is 20 centimeters taller than that and had even bigger muscles!

"Sorry for leaking such a weird voice."

"I don't mind. In fact, it is quite modest for someone who is meeting me for the first time."

I somewhat felt like I ended up seeing a sensitive side of this person. He is probably conscious about his physique giving the other party a wrong impression. Now that I think about it, Vain had such a side to him too.

"You also had someone scream?"

".....My wife screamed the first time I had met her. It is a distant memory

now."

I see.

"It is quite rare to have guests from outside. Are you perhaps Kururi Helan-dono?"

"Yes, I am surprised you found out."

"I just guessed from the timing and rumours. Did you come hearing I had wanted to meet you?"

"Yes, that is also correct."

"Is that so? I am grateful. I had plenty of things I wanted to talk about when I met you but now when I have actually met you, I don't know where to start. Sorry about that, our family isn't really good at communication."

"Yes."

I understand. It would be kinda weird if they were to keep talking with that body. I can only imagine it being uncomfortable, scary and tragic.

"I guess, I'll start with thank you."

"Thank you.....?"

"Yes. Thank you for being friends with that awkward son of mine."

"Ahaha."

".....That's all."

That is all?! That's weird!! To end the conversation here!!

"Umm, Vain... are you not angry about your son going to another country? Umm, I was like the one who encouraged him too...."

"It is not something to be angry about. I have been telling him to live freely since he was a child and besides, our family has the travellers' bloodline. So in fact, he is probably living a more suitable path."

Travellers' bloodline.... It kinda feels adventurous. So cool. I kinda feel like travelling. I wonder what bloodline our family is of. I guess I will ask father when I return.....He will probably say he doesn't know, though....

“I was surprised when I heard my son had made a friend but when I saw you, I could understand.”

What does that mean?!

“And so, I have nothing but gratitude towards you for it.”

“I see.” So glad I was not chopped down. Seriously.

The knight leader did not seem to have anything more to say so I decided to leave.

When I opened the door and was about to leave, Mady-san and the guy I met first in the barracks were standing there.

“What are you doing?”

The leader’s rough voice came from the other side of the room.

“Leader! This person is Kururi Helan! Are you done already?!”

“Nn? I know that.”

“No, if you know then there is something you should say, isn’t there?! Please make him make swords for us! You are always breaking swords left and right with your monstrous strength! If you have him make you one here, your budget will also improve in the long term.”

As if he had just realized there was some fault on him when he was about to reject their request, he hesitated.

“Hmm...”

He looked like he was pondering something.

“Sorry, it seems my subordinates are correct. Because I break too many swords, I am hindering the financial aspects of the knights. I had been using cheap ones till now but I think I should get a good one and use it for a while now. Can I request you? I hear you are quite skilled.”

I looked at Rahsa. As I had come accepting his invitation, I thought it would be better asking him and unlike the time with the knights, his expression said ‘If it is okay with you, how about accepting?’

If so, I do not really have a reason to deny either so it was settled.

“I shall do my best to make something great, then. It will take a little time.”

“Then I leave it to you. I will be looking forward to it.”

To that reply, the ones who were most happy were the two knights behind. Exactly how many swords did he break till now....?

When we were leaving, Rahsa told me an interesting story.

“The leader of the knights has quite a lot of anecdotes about him but there is a really recent one which is amazing. When he went to sweep clean a thief troupe, he ended up breaking his sword in two. From there, he didn’t even use his subordinate’s weapons or the enemy’s ones—he beat 30 of them with his bare hands. I heard this from his subordinates so I don’t know how much of it is true but from how excited they were there, I think it is true.”

.....I ended up sympathizing with the thieves but I guess it is only natural. If that giant comes charging at you, you won’t feel anything but fear.

“It is very rare for that person to want something. That is how much he acknowledges your swords.”

“Did he see my sword?”

“It has been the hot topic in the castle for a while. He has seen it too.”

I have also given Vain one of my swords.

So, it is a request from his father now, eh?

It seems like the budget is quite large so this might be a pretty big job.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 22

“Heheh, today is my off day.”

When I woke up, there was a pretty girl sitting beside my bed.

The sunlight coming through the window shined on her, making her smile look even more radiant.

For the first scene I could see after waking up, it was the best.

“Morning. You seem pretty happy.”

“Yep, it is the off day I earned after working so it makes me even happier.”

“And, coming to my room first thing in the morning, perhaps you want to take me somewhere?”

“Yep! But it wasn’t my idea. I just met prince Rahsa a while ago and he said happily that we will go to an amazing place today.”

“Ohh, Rahsa did? I see.”

Amazing place, eh... I hope it isn’t amazing in a weird way.

“Nn? You don’t seem to be too eager.”

“No, it’s not that. Just a little sleepy still. I was working till late yesterday, you see.”

Laying out the plan on how to go about making Vain’s dad’s sword.

“That’s amazing. You’re already a professional. Why not shift occupation to that?”

“I will think about it.”

I did not want to make Iris wait so I quickly finished changing clothes and headed to Rahsa.

“Masquerade ball?”

“That’s right. It is held annually around this time of the year. I am not really

interested in it but since you are here this time too.... It seems to be an event one should participate in at least once, to know the nobles as well."

Nobles... you are royalty, though.

After Iris had come happily saying she had received an off day, this time Rahsa is saying this with a happy face. I can't really refuse then, can I?

Should I try participating even though I lack the etiquettes of a noble?

It is a rare opportunity after all.

"Yep, if you two want to, I can go as well."

"Really?! You're okay too, right, Iris-san?"

"I am not a noble though. Is that okay?"

"Of course! I will do something about that. And besides, it is a ball where you hide your identity after all. Please choose a dress and mask as you like. There are tons of those in this castle."

Certainly, I don't doubt that. They will prepare something for me too so I probably won't have to worry about the dress code.

'Hey, you! What is with that, dirty looking clothe?!" 'This is a party, you know! A party place! This!'

It looks like I won't have to deal with such embarrassing things.

When I go to an unfamiliar place, my thoughts just go crazy.

"Then, let's go pick a mask right now. Since we are doing this, how about keeping each other's masks a secret? You can look forward to meeting each other coincidentally at the hall that way."

"Ohh, that sounds like fun."

Yep, really fun.

But, that's like finding the most pretty person and the most noble-like kid, right?

That would be easy.

And the two of them would just have to search for a person who seem like

they do a lot of smithing.

“Let’s meet there then, after changing. We have quite a lot of time left so you can take your time dressing up.”

And so, we started preparing separately inside the castle.

Like always, Supatifila-san will be looking after me. I am quite grateful to her.

“Sorry, for having you stick with me even with this.”

“It’s fine, it’s my job after all.”

I somewhat feel even worse after being told that.

She guided me to my private dressing room.

There were various items lined up, from shoes to hats. Rahsa said it was okay to pick any from here but there are so many, I cannot decide which to pick.

“I will just go with a black tuxedo to be safe. Could you get me one for my size?”

“Since you are going, why not challenge yourself with red?”

.....Won’t that make me look like a magician?

“....I will go with it then.”

I will be hiding my face anyway so it might be good.

“What should I do about the mask? I think I will go with this white one to not stand out much.

“Since you are doing this, how about going with a more characteristic one?”

“.....For example?”

“Like that bear there.”

Bear?! A bear mask at a masquerade ball?!!

And it looks a lot like a mascot-like bear mask too...

“.....I will take it.”

Well, I am what you would call an amateur at this. So it would be better to leave it to Supatifila-san since she is probably more knowledgeable. Without

going with masks which would look like I am trying too hard, the bear one will look quite lax and nice, right? As expected of Supatifila-san!

“All that’s left is a hat, right?”

“Right. How about wearing a silk hat to be safe?”

“Yep, that sounds good, let’s do that.”

“Are you okay with that?”

Why?! You are the one who suggested it!

“Since you are doing this, how about going a three-cornered hat? Like a pirate.”

I see. Adding some wildness to cuteness and nobleness, right? I can also hide my hair color with it properly too.

“.....I will go with that then.”

It’s no longer my coordination but I guess it is fine. With this, if the other people are going with the safer combinations, the possibilities of me biting my tongue rises.

After that, Supatifila-san helped me with the other minute coordination. The theme seemed to be smart and gorgeous. Was it just my imagination, or did she look like she was having fun?

“Then, we still have time left so let us head to the hall at ease.”

“Right. I leave it to you.”

She prepared a carriage, and I looked at the cityscape from inside while on the way to the hall.

I wondered if Iris and Rahsa were already heading there too.

I was curious as to how they dressed up.

I realized when I looked outside, that everyone was wearing masks.

Not only nobles, it seems like a similar event was being held all throughout the capital today. I see, so the fun things are not only among the nobles.

Crossing the busy city full of people with masks, we arrived at the old hall.

At the entrance, there was a line of people. Masks... Or rather, there were a lot of people who were completely dressed up. There were some birdman-like dress ups too...

That's a relief, I am not the only one who looks weird.

Getting off the carriage, I bid farewell to Supatifila-san. It seemed like she will come pick me up when it is over.

When I said 'Sorry.' she replied with 'It's my job so.'..... I am very sorry.

"Can I have your name, sir?"

After a while of standing in line, my turn came.

"Kururi Helan."

"Yes, you are in the invited list. Please wear this around your neck."

It looks like a necklace with magic stones in it, I wonder what it is...

"This is?"

"It is a magic stone which can change voice. It only has power enough to last a day but rest assured it will work perfectly during the party."

I see, they even change your voice.

Face, voice, and you can even act like a woman with the use of heels.

This.... I probably won't be able to recognize Rahsa nor Iris like this.....

Leaving that aside, I guess I will look forward to new meetings.

As I entered the hall, I noticed that it was dimly lit and a crowd of people were packed in a narrow space. Everyone was talking in a low voice but it was quite noisy as a whole. But, it is just the perfect amount of noise to have a wonderful meeting and talk about secrets.

Now then, since I also got some tomato juice in the entrance..... Hmm? Why tomato juice?

We-well, I should pull myself together and try talking to someone.

"Ah.... ah..."

I tried checking my voice before doing that but I found out it was too rough. This voice was too rough!

Even though there were pretty ladies over there too, because of my voice the hurdle just rose so much.

But, it is supposed to be like this so would it be better this way?

“Excuse me. Can we talk for a bit?”

A stylish man wearing a silver mask came asked me. He appeared to be quite cool but his voice was very high pitched, making it really interesting.

“Yes?”

“Ah, no, sorry, I was just surprised by your rough voice.”

“I bet. I also feel really uncomfortable talking with it.”

“I am also having a hard time getting used to this high pitched voice. By the way, can I ask something?”

“Yes, go ahead.”

“By any chance, did you meet a woman named Iris?”

.....Prince Arch!! This guy is definitely prince Arch! Now that I look properly, his pretty blonde hair is showing a bit from his hat!

So he also came to the ball.....

What do I do? I don't really know where Iris is and I don't feel like helping either.

“.....I talked to her, just a while ago.”

“Really?!”

“If I am not wrong, she said something about not feeling good and leaving...”

“What?! Darn it, I was too late....”

The person who is probably prince Arch—or like, definitely prince Arch, sat on a sofa on the sides, depressed.

He became more depressed than I thought he would be.

I kinda felt sorry for him...

“....Ah, sorry. The woman I talked to earlier was called Irin. I do not know of a woman named Iris.”

“Really? That is a relief! Then I still have a chance. Person with rough voice, I am grateful to you.”

He hurriedly went to the ring of the hall.

Bye bye, person with a high-pitched voice.

Well, now that the bothersome man has also left, I should go have fun by myself.

I guess I will go talk with pretty ladies while searching for Rahsa and Iris.

When I looked around the room, I couldn't see anyone's faces so they seemed pretty.

Honestly, I do not know who is who at all.

I wandered around the place while drinking the tomato juice.

And at that moment, I felt a shock—exactly as if my body was screaming.

‘This person is definitely a beautiful person’ my beautiful person sensor was screaming.

A pretty woman wearing a blue dress and a cute usagi (bunny) mask.

That person is definitely pretty.

You can't have an aura like that unless you're quite pretty. Maybe, that is Iris.

“Can I have a little of your time, lovely usagi-san?”

“Ara, that's quite a rough voice. If it's a little, then sure, Kuma-san (bear).”

Befitting of her aura, she replied with a clear and pretty voice. Hmm? She is using a magic stone, right?..... That kinda feels unfair. Even though I got a beast-like voice. This just makes it like the beauty and beast, doesn't it?

“I couldn't help but speak up, seeing such a delicious usagi.”

If I am doing this, might as well take on the role properly.

“Will a small bunny be enough to fill your stomach?”

Oho, looks like she is taking it.

“I desire quality more than quantity so there is no problem there.”

“Fufu, well then, I shall accompany you for a while.”

Making a toast with her carrot juice, she drank it at once.

Her gestures looked really elegant. She was not Iris, probably. Iris won’t do it like that. She must be a young noble.

“Do you not feel a little insecure? Coming into such a place alone, being a usagi.”

“Ara, even though I look like this, I am quite strong, you know? And besides, I am quick at running away.”

“Is that so? Sorry for being unnecessarily concerned.”

“That’s right. Even if it’s kuma-san, I could finish you with one attack, you know?”

“.....I will be careful.”

She seems to be quite the strong-willed woman. If this is backed by actual strength, I must be a little careful. To not go through a painful experience.

“Do you come to these parties often, usagi-san?”

“No, I just came on a whim... And, with a bit of expectation. I do not come to these recently. I liked them before, though.”

“Before? Did something change?”

“Women are creatures who are always changing, you know?”

I could feel a somewhat heartrending feeling from her. I wondered if she was searching for someone.... In this hall.

“By the way, your gaze seems a little impatient. Even though you have me talking with you here.”

“Ara, did I make you notice it?”

“I have only been looking at you so of course, I would notice. If it’s fine with

you, shall we search together?"

"....."

After gazing at her empty glass, she looked up again.

"Are you okay with that?"

"I can't leave a woman with a sad face."

"Even though you can't see my face...."

It seemed like she laughed just a little. I just felt like that.

"I have not met that person in a while. I do not even know if they are in this hall. However, it seems they are in the capital. And so, I thought just maybe, and came to this place."

"Don't be so sad. I am sure he is in this hall as well."

"How can you say for sure, kuma-san?"

"Wishes are something which are accepted, usagi-san."

She looked into my eyes for a while. It seems like my kind words resounded in her heart. That made me happy too, if it makes her happy, even if a bit.

"....You are a wonderful person, kuma-san. If I had not met that person, I might have wanted to deepen my bond with you."

"I see. He must be a wonderful person. I am also staggering from woman to woman like this but, actually, I too have a person I long for. And so, I know how you feel. For me as well, if that person was not there, I might have wanted to know you more."

"....Such a bad kuma-san."

"Then, Usagi-san, please tell me how the person you are searching for looks like. I am sure they are in this hall."

"When you say it with such confidence, it makes me feel like he is actually here as well. Umm, his unique characteristic..."

I already asked but... this is a masquerade ball. Even if they have a unique characteristic, won't they hide it here? Hmm? Can we really find him?

“Right. He usually has soot stuck to his sleeve.”

Soot??

“....I am sorry but will there really be such a person here where the nobles have gathered?”

“You do not need to be so respectful. Of course, you are absolutely correct but, he is not just any noble. He is a somewhat... weird person.... That is what's good about him, though.”

Soot in his sleeves, eh? Sounds like quite the mischievous guy.

“In this dimly lit hall, it would be difficult to spot such a thing. Are there any, more, kind of easy to spot characteristic?”

“Easy to spot....”

After pondering for a while, she thought up an answer.

“It would be difficult to spot with all the hats but they have red hair.”

“.....”

“Nn? Did something happen?”

Red hair and soot, eh.... I do have a clue...

“Usagi-san, sorry about this so suddenly but can I know your favourite food?”

“Favourite food?.... That would be potato.”

Bingo!

“Officially, I go with chiffon cake. But my answer to close friends is potato. To someone who likes potatoes as well, I can answer in more detail too.... Eh-Wa-Kuma-san?! Why are you running away?! Kuma-san!!”

Before I realized, I had started running.

Run, run.

From the woman I felt was pretty, run!

From that woman I thought would definitely be pretty, Eri—run, run!!

You do end up meeting unexpected people at unexpected places, huh?

Being a man, one should not go from one woman to another. They would definitely go through a painful experience.

At the place I had arrived after running for a while, I let out my breath and decided to stop fooling around.

I should find Rahsa and Iris quick and after enjoying that, I should withdraw as soon as possible.

I have had my fill today. So this is what they mean when they say 'when your blood runs cold'.

I am done with that. So done. Now then, where is Iris and Rahsa?

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 23

“Please, stop it!!”

While I was searching for Iris and Rahsa, at a corner of the hall, I spotted a group of men forcibly pulling a woman’s hand.

It was a really sweet lady. Or so I assumed from her aura. I could not see her face, after all.

Not because the lady was pretty, but my heart of justice was burning. I shall strike them down with my fists!

I also followed them as they were taking her outside.

“Wait right there.”

All of them turned to face me.

3 hoodlums. All of them were wearing expensive accessories and splendid masks.

Really, learn something from me, wearing a kuma (bear) mask... Umm, can we please exchange??

“Haa? What are you? With that oddly rough voice.”

“This is because of the magic stone. Let the lady go. She is not liking it.”

“Haa? I don’t know what your origin is but you have to stay out of this. Don’t come crying when you get to know our families later.”

“Hmm? Do you get physical strength from your family?”

“Obviously. Authority is power. You wanna try?”

The guy who appeared to be the representative of the three came and stood in front of me.

“Do you think you can win against me here? Let’s assume you can win against us three here with your strength. So what about it?”

Nn? What is he asking me?

I don’t quite understand.

“No, if you shift to violence here, I plan on beating you all and saving the lady, though”

“First, you can’t even win against me. And even if you do, you will face even painful things later on. Do you understand?”

“No, sorry. I don’t really understand.”

“Ah? Are you making fun of me? I don’t know from which shabby noble family you are from but I know you are definitely lower than me. I can get that with a glance. Just try grazing me a little. I will destroy your family and you will forever be hated by your relatives.”

“.....Sorry, can you say that again?”

I do know that I was being provoked here but because of the magic stone his voice sounded really hoarse. I couldn’t understand the important part at all. And also, he was talking really fast too.

“That’s it. You will be executed. Just know that, I won’t accept any apology now.”

“Umm, can you take off the magic stone? I can’t really hear you properly. Sorry, after doing that, can you repeat all that?”

I heard a ‘Ggh!’ sound and understood the mask I was wearing had broken.

Looks like he punched me straight to the face. This is why I do not like masks. It makes the vision so narrow.

I could feel the pain in my cheekbones.

“Ouch!! This bastard, I won’t forgive you!”

The guy who punched me hurt his hand and was going into a frenzy.

I thought I asked quite politely but it ended up in an outburst.

Well, justice is on my side so I can fight him, right?

“Wait!” said a loud voice, and everyone faced that way.

It was the woman who was being kidnapped.

“Kuma-san, I am sorry. Don’t fight for me anymore than this. It looks like they

are quite high ranked nobles. It will end up causing you trouble so just leave. I will.... Do something about it myself.”

“You know your place, don’t you, woman? So? The woman is agrees too. Well, I won’t let you run now anyway.”

Seems like he finally removed his magic stone and I could clearly hear it now.

“Well, it seems they won’t let me leave either and I can’t just let this go.”

“.....Sorry, kuma-san.”

“Don’t worry about it. I came by my own will.”

The woman threw away her gorgeous feathered mask and said, “I am Iris. If you are gonna target someone, target me.”

‘Woo’— I could hear one of them blowing whistle.

Seeing Iris’ beautiful face, it looks like they understood how big of a fish they caught.

....Wait, it was Iris?

Even though she was wearing a mask, they ended up getting the big prize.

“I was wondering that such a low status noble had mixed in but this... this....”

As if he were appraising Iris, the representative man looked at her.

The woman was my precious friend, Iris, and I already could not stand around bearing this.

I should end this farce about now.

“You fools, you went too far. I guess I will let you guys know a little pain.”

“You wear a stupid mask and your head is full of flowers as well? That’s fine, it feels the best to beat a justice-barking guy like you.”

“Like I said, kuma-san, wait!!”

Iris said again, with a loud voice.

“Kuma-san, you should just leave now. I will do something about this.”

“Something...?”

"The authority they speak of is honestly.... Kinda scary but we are not at fault here. Besides, they made the first move too so...."

Everyone of us waited for what Iris had to say. We were waiting but what came was a fierce high-kick.

The representative guy went flying. That was quite the kick.

After that, the two who were standing also took a straight kick and went down.

".....I overdid it a little. I wanted to settle this peacefully, though.."

"Fufuffu, no, this is just about right for people like them, right?"

I took off the broken mask and as well as the magic stone.

"Ah, Kururi?! It was Kururi all along?"

"Yep, I found their delinquency while searching for you. Well, it is only natural to do this much to guys like these."

"Sorry, because of me your face... does it not hurt?"

"Just a little. It is cold outside so let's head back. Let's go back to the castle after finding Rahsa." "Yep... Sorry."

"I saw it...!"

With blood all over his face, the hoodlum's representative got up.

Blood all over his face... Iris' kick was that intense? I better be careful not to get kicked.

"Red haired fool, your face, I will absolutely not forget it. These wounds and humiliation you gave me. I will make you regret it."

I have something to say first... I was not the one who gave you the wounds and humiliation! It was not me!

"Well, since we are doing this, I will also tell you my name. It's Kururi Helan. Pleasure to meet you."

"Fuhahahaha, idiot! I was planning on getting you soon but you saved me all

the trouble. Kururi Helan. My memory is good. Don't forget my name. It's Fregen. My family name is—”

“Ah, that's okay. I will forget it anyway...”

And I can't even see his face properly because of the blood.

“I will definitely not forgive you! I will tell papa about you!”

Oh no!! He will tell papa!!

He had some pressure being all bloodied up but that last sentence just ruined it all.

“Haa, I am not interested anymore. Let's go, Iris.”

“Is it really okay? Leaving them like this.”

“It is okay. If you don't go soon he will tell his papa, after all.”

Iris laughed a little.

“You shoudn't.... Say that.. Pff”

Iris said with a low voice.

“You fools! You laughed, didn't you?! I won't forgive you, I won't forgive you at all!!”

“If you come alone, I will take you on anytime. See ya.”

Taking Iris' hand, as she was hesitating a little, we left the place.

The Fre... something guy was still shouting from behind. Something about his wounds and humiliation.

I wasn't the one who kicked you, alright?!

“Sorry, Kururi. I can't really adapt myself to the party, and I caused this trouble too— this is just the worst.”

“It's fine. It might have been a serious deal... Now, let's go find Rahsa and leave.”

“You sure? I would feel bad if you were having fun....”

“It's completely fine.”

It's that-that, surely, Rahsa will....

After searching for a while with Iris, we found someone like Rahsa.

"Hey, Kururi, I would feel bad for prince Rahsa if I am wrong but..."

"No, you are probably not wrong."

Silently standing at a corner of the hall, a rather small guy.

Without drinking the mysterious drink in his hand, he was just standing there.

At a warm hall, that hawk-masked young noble was standing still.

"Really....? I thought prince Rahsa was more like, you know? Who would confidently go around places like these...."

"I don't really know well myself but he is probably not that good at places like these. For a big crowd to assemble at one place and communicate without rules."

"Even prince Rahsa has things he is bad at, huh? I kinda feel some affinity towards him now."

"Right? Now that I think about it, he was probably like that the first time I met him too...."

".....Let's go back with him, shall we?"

"Yep."

Stealthily coming from behind, I gently put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Found you."

"A.... Anijii....."

Is it just me or was his voice shaking just now? I had thrown away the magic stone which changed my voice so he understood immediately.

Looks like he waited quite a bit. I wish I had found him sooner. That was all I was feeling.

"Let's go back."

"Yes..!"

We went back together in one carriage.

Maybe because we were leaving from an unfamiliar place, the atmosphere inside the carriage was quiet.

I felt with my whole body that the atmosphere felt kinda soft.

"I thought I would be okay if I were with you, but, as I expected, it was no good."

"Don't be so depressed about it. I was really, really bad too and besides, it isn't something to boast about even if you are good at it, right?"

"That's right but, but Aniki, you were able to hit on a pretty lady. Really, Aniki, you are amazing."

So he was watching me.....

"Yes. No one would have such an appearance except you."

What do you mean such appearance?! And let me just add, it was almost all Supatifila-san's suggestion!

"Well, still, it's that—you know, it was still a failure."

I was wondering what to do for the most part too.

Even Iris looked at me like 'Hee, so you were doing that.'

I really.... Strongly, want them to stop... Isn't that what that place is for?!

"I lost sight of you two in the middle. It was the worst after that. Exactly where did you go?"

"Ah..."

Iris looked sorry.

Even though she is absolutely not at fault.

"A little event. It seemed fun so it is a shame I couldn't participate."

"Something like that existed? Well, I wasn't feeling like that anyway so it's okay."

Rahsa sighed, as if he was sick and tired of it.

"I don't want to go to such a place for a while now. Oh, now that I mention that, my brother was also there. As expected, he completely fit in—I should learn

something from him.”

“Ah, he was.”

“Really? I would have liked to meet him.”

Those words! I want to tell it to him!

He would probably feel the best.

“I want to have some soy soup after I get back.”

“Same.”

—

“You bastard, Fregen.”

“Hou, from that voice, is it prince Arch-dono?”

Having come outside after searching all around for Iris, he had found Fregen.

“.....Why are you so bloodied up?”

“.....Don’t mind that. It’s fine. It’s been long, prince who went to a boondocks school.”

“Don’t make fun of it. It’s a proper school with tradition. And besides, there are interesting people there too.”

“Only an idiot would distance himself from the capital lifestyle for such a thing.”

“.....Is the blood fine? I can’t concentrate on talking with your face covered in it.”

“I said it’s fine! I am in a bad mood now! I will execute that fool who did this to me!”

Raising his voice, he immediately made an evil laugh. He had remembered performing the ‘execution’ in the past and the distorted happiness he had felt.

“Your bad habit is showing. No matter how much money you have, there are things you must not do. Especially, in front of my eyes.”

Being threatened by the prince, the evil laugh faded from Fregen’s face.

They had known each other from long ago and had a bond before but now it was not anything to speak of.

“It is not related to you.”

“Is that so? Depending on the matter, I will add restraints personally.”

“You think you can do that to me....?”

They had glared at each other for a while but Fregen left the place first.

The prince did not stop him. He did not know what that guy was going to do and certainly, it was not good to stop him with force.

Fregen’s family, the Dartanel family, runs the number one company in the capital.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 24

“Aniki, you have received two letters. Both senders do not seem like someone you would know but... they were delivered to the castle as official documents.”

At first I was really stiff in the castle but now that I have lived in it for more than a week, I had leveled up to be able to sit on the sofa with my legs crossed while having nice fruit sake.

It does kinda bother me how Supatifila-san who was standing behind would occasionally mutter something suggestive like ‘Iris-sama *sure* works hard...’

“For me? I wonder who it is from.”

I looked at the sender.

Fregen Dartanel and Gormen Areshik... Ah, I really don’t know these two.

“I do not know who this Gormen person is but I know Fregen quite well. He isn’t someone who would be Aniki’s acquaintance...”

“Hee, what kind of a person is he?”

“It is not much of a good name. I kinda have a hunch that something bad will happen. He has been colliding with my brother quite a lot from long ago....”

What an *amazing* person. Is he the god of infectious diseases or something?

Even still, to collide with the prince, he must have guts.

“Can’t you correct something like that with the royal family’s power?”

“That’s right... My father does not really like using authority much but... More than anything, the main cause is this Fregen person’s family, Dartanel holds quite a bit of power.”

“That amazing?”

“It is frustrating to say it but, yes. This country has the tendency to focus authority in the center and Dartanel family is the head of that. They handle the core of the capital’s economy after all.... Actually, they are also a big portion of why Kudan kingdom could prosper this much.”

I see, so money means power, eh? And they also have the merit of expanding the country.

I guess it would be quite hard to stop that once it goes on a rampage.

"The Dartanel family is a very distinguished family and their previous head was an extremely good person but their current head is more of a greedy person. And also, the next head would be Fregen, who keeps bringing trouble. It hurts my head to think of it."

"That's quite a lot of trouble... I thought our territory was having it pretty rough but everyone has it rough, huh?"

"Yes, but Helan territory's development is certainly the best news as of late. Your father, Toral-dono is also a person of trust and my father also praises him frequently."

Is that true?!

My father will be super happy when I tell him that.

He is a person full of emotions, after all. Even among that, sadness is more within him so I should let him take it easy sometimes.

"That Fregen bastard, he probably got the scent of some good business from the prospering Helan territory. Aniki, there is no need to fear. You can brush off all his pushy demands."

Of course, I will.

My spirit has not gone so low as to yield to lowly threats and my love for my territory has not faded for me to sell it. In fact, I am full of spirit and miss my territory since I have not gone there in a while.

"I feel like tearing the letter apart after hearing that."

"Yes, sorry about it. But since it is an official document, could you please have a look at it?"

If that is the case, I do not really want to bother Rahsa, so I guess I will properly read it.

'Respected and affectionate Kururi Helan-dono,

I am in your debt for what you did the other day. I would really love to return the favour so please come to our house tonight. I am really hoping to meet you.'

".....Or so it says."

"Directly.... That is unexpected. I thought it would be something about the Helan territory..."

Or rather, what? Aniki, do you know him? It feels like you saved his life or something."

Right? I mean he also wrote respected and affectionate and what not.

Did I save someone on the way to the castle or something? I did greet a lot of people....

"I don't really remember. I might remember if I see his face."

"I see.... What will you do? Accept the invitation?"

"No, I will refuse."

"You will refuse even considering the content of the letter? As expected of Aniki! I wanted you to refuse so it makes me happy!"

Actually, I refused because it seemed like Rahsa did not want me to accept it from the start. I would like Rahsa to feel better than someone who I don't even remember.

"Hahah, now then, let's just throw this away. Supatfila-san, please incinerate this. And also, please send a letter of refusal."

So it is okay to throw it after reading, eh? How honest of him to properly maintain the procedure. Incinerate at that too. Exactly how much do you hate this guy?

Moreover, even Supatfila-san who was ordered to burn it also seemed a bit happy.

I realized this recently but she seems to be happy when Rahsa is happy.

Well, I made Rahsa happy too so her spell 'Iris-sama *sure* works hard' won't be coming for a while probably.

"The other letter is from Gormen Areshik. I do feel like I heard the name

before but let's open it."

"What will I do if it's a love letter?"

"It is probably a guy, are you okay with that?"

"....."

I opened it.

'Respectable and affectionate Kururi Helan-dono'

Again. I am being respected quite a lot these days. Did the society finally come to know of my charm?

'Acknowledging your skill as a blacksmith, I invite you to the Blacksmith Organization Ten Excellence meeting. I have important talk with you so I would really like it if you were to participate.'

Blacksmith Organization Ten Excellence representative, Gormen Areshik.'

"Ahh, I see. So it is Gormen-san of the Blacksmith Organization. Aniki, don't you think you should participate in this?"

"Is he someone famous? Also, what is this Blacksmith Organization?"

"It's where the blacksmith masters are assembled in the capital to form an organization. I do not know well but half of the weapons the soldiers use are from Gormen-san's company, *Soul of Iron*."

"Isn't there quite a lot of soldiers in the capital? Can they keep up?"

"Yes, *Soul of Iron* is quite the large scale smith."

There is a place like that? I could see the spectacle of all the good blacksmiths gathering and brushing up their skills... It is quite different from me as I do it by myself so I got kinda excited about it.

"It seems interesting so maybe I will go to this."

"Yes, I will send a reply then. I am sure they have acknowledged your skill."

"That would be nice."

On the day of the meeting, I wore the very noble-like clothes Rahsa had prepared for me and headed to the meeting place. The clothes really fit my

body well so it was easier to move. Did he make it like this so that I can smith even while wearing this?

Won't it look a little odd, though?—when I asked Rahsa that, he replied with, 'You're a noble so let's display that identity.'

The carriage went on for a while, going further away from the middle of the capital. I guess it would be far from the noble city.

The driver said 'We have arrived' and I looked out to see the place. There was a building different from what I had imagined in front of me. I had imagined a place with soot all over it but... it was a much cleaner, pretty building made of brick.

There was a proper reception inside as well, to which I was also surprised. I had made up a somewhat coarse image of it on my own.

I was imagining a place which was surrounded by blacksmiths.... I guess I was taking it too lightly. Glad I wore proper clothes.

"Kururi Helan-sama, correct? We have been waiting. The assembly hall is deep inside. I shall guide you to it."

Being guided by a polite lady, I walked into the building. At the hall, members were already gathered and I ended up drawing everyone's attention. I was an invited guest and it was my first time meeting everyone here so it was the natural reaction but still, I kinda felt embarrassed.

'So young.' 'Slender.' 'Wearing good clothes.' 'But exactly as we were told.'

I could hear some of them silently speaking.

"So you have come. Please, sit down."

An old man sitting furthest inside the hall said that. The surrounding people were also old in appearance. There was probably only one man among them who was about 30.

I wondered what would happen now. It made me a little nervous.

"You have my gratitude for coming. You really are a noble. You are a person befitting of your alias, *The Great Dancer*."

“The Great Dancer?”

What is that? Moreover, an alias? Me? Dancer even though I am a guy?.... I guess that one is fine.

“Oya? By your reaction, it seems that was the first time you heard it. You probably do not interact with other blacksmiths much.”

“Yes, I am doing it by myself mostly.”

“I see, I see. Well, everyone with amazing skill has an alias. By the way, I am known as the *Iron Brain*, Gormen Areshik.”

As I thought, this person is the one who invited me, Gormen Areshik. He looked older than everyone here so I had thought he would be the one but... I am kinda curious about his alias *Iron Brain*. Does that mean that's all he has going in his brain? If that is so, he must be quite amazing. Both in a good way and bad way.

“Now then, since The Great Dancer has also arrived, let us begin the meeting. Today's agenda is, as you all know, to select a person to fill the empty chair of Elder Camek, who passed away the other day. This might be your first time hearing The Great Dancer but we have been talking about you for a while after hearing rumours about you.”

The *Elder* part is the alias, right? If it is an alias, that means that's the impression that person gave, right? So by elder, does it mean he was always old? I would like to hear more about this, please! Out of personal interest!

“And so, by chance, we were able to get a sword you made in our hands... And this sword was such a rare beauty. I could feel vivid energy from the sword and most importantly, it was delicate and gorgeous. On top of that, we got to know the person who made it is a young noble. It might have been selfish of me but I immediately decided to give you the alias, The Great Dancer.”

“So that is how it came to be... It is an honor receiving such a nice alias.”

I am so glad it wasn't *Youngster*. If there is an *Elder*, I can't deny the possibility of it happening.

“And so, this is the sword which gave us the deep impression at that time. It is

a sword you made, correct?”

The sword Iron Brain held out... It was a sword I had made. It is not like I can remember all the swords I made but I definitely remember the ones where I curved my name on. By the way, it seems like one should call each other by their alias here so I should learn from it.

“Yes.... that is... right.”

“That’s quite an inarticulate way of saying it.”

Inarticulate? I mean, that is true. Surely, it was a sword I gave to someone but it wasn’t that well made. I feel like it is a sword I made when I didn’t get much sleep. In the first place, I did not make it with the intention to sell so I didn’t make it all that good. If such a half-assed sword of mine gets judged, to be honest, I kinda feel more embarrassed than happy.

“No, hahah, I see. It is good then. I am glad I came.”

“Yes. It is difficult to reach this level without natural talent. Do you have a teacher?”

“Yes, his name is Dogan. He is an obstinate person who truly has the spirit of an artisan. Do you know him?”

“Hoo, so Dogan is your teacher. I have been his teacher so naturally, I do know him. Among my students, he wasn’t that good but he was weird in a good way. I can see his genuine love towards smithing from you. To give birth to a dragon—that is quite the achievement, Dogan.”

What a weird turn of fate. To think teacher Dogan was Gorsen-san’s student. And also that he wasn’t that good—kinda makes me want to object as his student. But he probably knows teacher Dogan way better than me. The fact that he still remembers him means.....

So that means this person is the teacher of my teacher. Doesn’t that make him a really amazing person?

“Even he does not have an alias. Can you comprehend how amazing you are from that?”

“Means I am better than teacher? I do not really think that is the case,

though..."

"How many years do you think I have been in this world? Dogan does enter a group of people in this world but is definitely not one of the top. The top, that is truly someone among these ten—that is what I think."

I wanted to hear that from my teacher but I guess my teacher's teacher would be good too.

"The ones at the top will decide what will happen of smithing from now on. Protecting as well as advancing smithing, is something the people present here should do. And thus, I can't pick an unskilled person. I think you are worthy of one of these 10 seats. I wanted to hear your and the others' opinions about officially inaugurating you to your position today."

The explanation of the situation had ended and we were not entering the main topic for today.

I will pull the business world of the blacksmiths as one of the top?! Even though I had not even opened my shop, a dream like talk came fluttering in.

"May I speak?"

Gormen-san and I were at the two ends, facing each other, and there were 3 people on the right and 4 on the left. A man in the prime of his life raised his hand.

"Go ahead, *Kabuki*"

"I am against *The Great Dancer*'s addition to the ten excellence."

"Hou, you always give clear opinions. Please, let us know the reason."

"Yes, to be honest, I had approved of it before coming here. However, after looking at the sword once again, it kinda gives off a feeling of youth... It is a great sword and honestly, it is a kind which even I can't make. However, when compared to my swords, I think it is inferior. I want to keep this place a place where only people the same as me or above exists. Sorry for being selfish."

"No, it is an important opinion. The Great Dancer, do you have anything to say to this?"

Of course I do. He said it politely but I was being insulted as an artisan.

"It might come out as an excuse, and it is not like I really want to enter the ten excellence but that sword is not finished well. It was my naivety to let it get out to the world as a half baked sword and I will learn from it. Let me say this again, it is not like I want to enter the ten excellence. However, it would be troubling if one were to judge me by that sword alone. My skills are still evolving day by day. That sword is not my grand sum of skill.

I think I said pretty much everything I wanted to say...

I did not really know how amazing of a place this is but if one were to ask me if I want to join then, honestly, I do not. It seems like a bother.

"I am glad you are clear with your opinion as well. To think you can make swords greater than this... if that is true then that is amazing. Depending on that, you might even jump straight to the top..."

"Only if that is true. Youngsters always tend to exaggerate themselves. Please consider that as well."

The *Kabuki* is definitely not accepting me but I can respect how he does not sugarcoat his words. *Iron Brain* said it too but I guess he is an honest person. Not a type I hate.

"I approve of him."

Closest to me, on the left side of the table, the man who looked like 30 revealed his opinion.

"So you approve, *Zeni Geba*. You don't often display your opinion so it is quite unusual of you."

(TL note: *Zeni* means money in Japanese and *Geba* means die Gewalt (power) in German, so the title can be translated into "Moneypower".)

Zeni Geba?! Are you really okay with that?!

I mean, it does sound kinda cool but they are calling you *Zeni Geba*, you know?!

"Youth is a strong point. That fact that he can make even better swords, whether that is true or false, the fact that he can make that sword at this point is important. I greatly approve."

"There is also that way of looking at it. Certainly, we are lacking youth here. The only one here who is lively is probably you, Zeni Geba. And it is also true that the others, including me, tend to think one-sidedly."

After that, there was a opposition of opinions between the opposing *Kabuki* and the approving *Zeni Geba*.

Iron Brain seemed to be on the approving side but because of his position, he had to stay neutral and thus, the situation came to a 4v4. As if the *Iron Brain* liked the meeting to be heating up, whenever it was about to calm down, he poured more oil.

Is it just me or do they look like they are having quite fun? Honestly, it is a situation where I alone am left out.

"Everyonee~ It is about time we have lunch~"

The young, receptionist lady came in carrying food and everyone obediently abided.

"With his assets, there is a rumour Zeni Geba is about to buy the position of a noble. And so, maybe he is happy about another noble joining."

It looks like the *Iron Brain* can naturally scoop out a person's thoughts. Zeni Geba's cheeks got a little red while he was having lunch.

"Ah, yes yes, I did not yet tell The Great Dancer all about the ten excellence yet. As we are giving you such a position, of course a compensation befitting of it is also there. We have a foundation and from there, quite a lot of money is provided. Half of us here are refusing it but really, quite a lot of money is divided every year. Well, since The Great Dancer is a noble so it might just be about spare change to you."

Money?! A good amount of it?!

".....After how much time?"

"Oya? It seems you're interested. Of course, all the time while you have the position. As long you go mad with your skills and don't go mad yourself, we don't really expel anyone either."

“Is that so? You can never have too much money. I am the next head of the Helan territory, even if it just some spare change, I can use it properly.”

“I see, I see. It looks like The Great Dancer is quite talented. The prince also seems like a person who has it together—this country’s future looks bright. I can die in peace.”

Don’t say such things. But, him saying all that like he was having fun also kinda looked cool.

“Now then, since our stomachs are also full, let’s get to the conclusion. Saying that we will have a look at your other swords at a later date, let’s put out our opinions for now. I like the meeting heating up but I do not want it delayed.”

“Then, let’s go with majority rule like always.”

“Right. Let’s go clockwise starting from me. *Iron Brain*, approve.”

As I thought, he approves.

“*Kabuki*, approve.”

After that, unexpectedly, *Kabuki* also turned to approve. Even though he was initiating the opposition.

The person after that, and the person after that, and eventually everyone present there unanimously agreed.

.....What exactly was the passionate discussion a while ago?

“And there you have. As you heard, the whole place unanimously wants to welcome you. Lastly, if you were to also accept, we would officially make you a member but....”

The progression was so fast that honestly, I became a little perplexed.

But, I am being acknowledged and... also, money? Seems like I will get a little money too... not like I really want it but... No, really.

I also want to restore my honour from the half-assed sword too so...

“It is an honor. Of course, I will gladly accept.”

“Very well! Well then, the Ten Excellence meeting is now over! Suspended! We will send the authorized proof later so wait a few days.”

As the *Iron Brain* announced ‘suspended’ with an unthinkable volume judging from his age, everyone left the place at full speed. They didn’t even exchange greetings as they were leaving.

As expected of artisans!

The only exception among them, Zeni Geba, came to talk to me.

“The Great Dancer, if you are okay with it, how about coming to my company later? You can have a look at how easily I earn money and also something interesting.”

“Yes, I will gladly come by.”

I also made a light acquaintance so it was a fruitful day.

Having thought about it now, did I become quite the artisan?

The day when I will think I was correct to choose this path might be really close by.

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Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 25

At the moment, I am running. That too, at an intense speed!

Why? Because I came across a certain oddball.

Yes, that weird person.

It all started early morning.

After waking up in the morning, as I had free time, I thought out I would take a look at the plantation inside the castle out of curiosity. On the way, I had met a very pretty woman. It might be taken as rude to enquire into a woman's age but there is no doubt that she was not of my age. I thought she was probably as old as my mother but she felt strangely young. Rather than forcing to appear young, it looked like she lived life as she pleased and that was why she looked so young.

And I had been looking at that person for a while. It was a little different than being charmed... How do I say this?.. This person, was a little odd.

She entered the medicinal plant field where medicines, which were similar to the ones Toto cultivated, were lined up, and she went sniffing them all. Holding up the plant close to her face to take its scent—She was not doing much of an elegant gesture. She herself leaned over and pressed her nose to the plants and sniffed them. It was a nice gesture to the plants but not to herself. Especially for a woman like her who was probably raised very well.

Without collecting my thoughts, I ended up speaking.

“Umm, what are you doing?”

“Eh? What.... I am sniffing the medicinal plants, obviously.”

She spoke as if I was the weird one. In other words, to her, the act of sniffing medicinal plants was normal and me bearing doubts to that was weird.

“I-I see. Why with such a posture? It does not feel very lady-like.

“This much is fine for someone who has been as lady-like as me. It's no good for you, though.”

It is a problem of level? You mean my experience as a noble is low?

“That was something I did not know.”

“Right? It’s just between us, alright?”

Looks like this wonderful information must not be spread. I do not plan on doing it either, though.

It probably won’t be popular even if it spread, I think...

“Are you fond of medicinal plants? It is only a little but I am knowledgeable about it too.”

“Ara, I do not like medicinal plants at all. In fact, this field is sort of like an enemy’s encampment to me.”

I can’t understand this conversation at all!

“Then, as before, what are you doing?”

“Like I said, I am sniffing the plants, though?”

The conversation is going nowhere!

“.....If this is the enemy camp then are you observing the enemy? To compare with your own plants or something.”

“Fufu, good job deducing that without getting impatient. But, you are only about half correct.”

So she was conscious of trying to make me impatient... What do you think of that? It is my fault for starting the conversation with this pretty, odd lady, though.

“The medicinal plants here are grown really well. I could just ask the secret directly to the one growing them but isn’t that frustrating? And so, I am here early morning to find out. By the way, the ones I am growing are not medicinal plants. They are much more delicious.”

“I see. So you are growing vegetables. That means, Tsukimi-san??”

Finally, she turned to face towards me. After taking a good look at her face upfront, it kinda resembled that person’s. On second thought, it almost looks exactly like that person. So much that it makes me think if they were to age like

that, they would end up looking like this.

“Eliza’s mother....?”

“Yes, that’s correct. And you are Kururi-kun, right?”

“You knew me?”

“Of course. Half of what my daughter writes to me are information about you, after all.”

“I-I see....”

That is troubling. It kinda makes me embarrassed..... It makes me really embarrassed. Kyaaa~

“Are you taking care of her properly?”

“Taking care... We don’t have such a relationship. Friend? Yes, we are doing extremely well as friends, yes!”

“I see.... Friends...”

Don’t come closing the distance squinting your eyes, please!

And don’t bring your face close! I kinda feel like I am being seen through!

I can’t stop sweating. That—that’s too close! Close, close, close!

“I guess I will stop teasing you.”

“Haha, thank you very much...”

So she was consciously teasing me. ‘Thank you very much’? Why am I being grateful....?

This is bad, this person is quite the villain! Really, she must have been an oddball for quite long.

“Kururi-kun, you are free right now, right? Help me out a bit.”

“Alright. I was just about to go look at your plantation, after all.”

She pulled my ear. Ow-ow-ow—can’t be impertinent to her.

“You know medicinal plants well, right? Then help me find the secret.”

“I am not an expert as to find out just by smelling though...”

“Just do it!”

And so, we both leaned to the plants and went around sniffing them. The secret to growing these plants? There is no way I could find that out. Just about—Ah, this place smells like earth or this plant smells pungent.

“So, did you get it?”

“No, this is reckless. Let’s just go ask honestly. If you don’t want to, I can ask for you.”

“That’s no good! This is a war. Is there someone as stupid to go ask the enemy general the secret of his soldier’s strength?!”

What is with that example....? Does she have a rival?

Isn’t it just that the sun is hitting this place properly?

“Ah! Tsukimi-san, the one I am smelling now—it can be eaten!”

“Nn...?”

“That one—A friend of mine who is knowledgeable about medicinal plants is always biting that when he is a little hungry. I hear it is crunchy and tasty.”

Whenever I went to the plastic greenhouse, I saw Toto often munching on that. When I asked, ‘Is that good?’ he replied ‘Well, it’s normal.’ but I will take it as delicious.

“Ara, that’s something nice.”

Tsukimi-san tore off one of it. And then another. Then, holding the plant, she faced me and smiled.

“I will eat it. That way I can find out the secret.”

“You looked like a thief from the start but with this you are actually one now.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine. I gave them some carrot the other day so we can call it even with this.”

I don’t know if it’s even or not but for me the feeling of guilt exceeds that.

“If it can be eaten as a food, then I wonder why it is a medicinal plant.”

“I hear it needs some special processing to be used as a medicinal plant.”

“Heee....”

Tsukimi-san looked at me like ‘This boy can be unexpectedly useful’. It was just something I thought and I don’t know if it is true or not but it probably was.

“Then, let’s head to the kitchen.”

After that, the quickness of her actions was amazing. Can’t really think of it as something a noble woman would be capable of. Can’t really think of it as someone her age would be capable of.

She started running at a terrifying speed.

“Wa-wait! You’re too fast!!”

In the blink of an eye, she kept going further. I will be left behind if I don’t run at full speed. I don’t know where the kitchen is so it would be troubling if I am left behind!.... Or will it? I can think later. I should chase now.

Too fast. Why is she even running?

I feel like I understand why she is called a phantom. I ran. I just desperately ran. That too, at an intense speed.

“Haa..haa..haa.. Why are you running?!”

“Haa... I want to... haa... eat it fast!”

We finally arrived at the kitchen. Being completely exhausted, I did not feel like eating.

“It can be eaten just like that, you know.”

“Right. I plan on having one just as it is. I will deep fry the other one.”

.....So that’s why you took two. I completely thought you took one more for me. Hahaha..... Hahaha...

“After cleaning it with water, slice it to one mouthful size each.”

Saying it by herself, she skillfully presented it on a plate.

And went on munching it down. Her mouth chewing it looked kinda cute. Saying it is cute might be rude though.

“Ara, won’t you eat?”

Eh?! There is some for me?!

I don't really want to eat it but that made me really happy.

I also started munching on it.

.....Yep, pretty normal.

"Pretty normal."

I guess that is how it is, huh? I wish I didn't say it was good.

"Let's try the fried one as well."

She went on preparing it skillfully again. I could understand that she was quite good at cooking.

"Is Eliza good at cooking too?"

".....You can have her make you something. That way, you will get to know, right?"

".....Right."

Me-me-meat and potato stew, please!!

The fried one was also done and I had a portion as well. I sprinkled some salt on it. It wasn't munchy anymore but was softer.

But even still.....

"It's pretty normal."

"Normal, it is."

"Could you understand the secret behind the good growth?"

"Not at all."

Right? If one could understand just by eating, that would be an amazing skill.

"Mmm, now that it has come to this, we have got no choice but to directly ask."

"You're going to ask for the secret of soldiers strength from the enemy soldier?!"

"Don't be impertinent!"

But you were the one who said it!

“Kururi-kun, you are free after this as well, right?”

“Yes, I was going to see your plantation, after all.”

Ow-ow-ow-oww—she pulled on my ear again.

“Then, come to my house. Eliza is there too.”

Is that okay?! But I am kinda nervous... But is it really okay?! Really...

“You’re on good terms with prince Rahsa. You could come with him.”

“Right, then I guess I will go...”

“Yes, then it’s today. I will be waiting then.”

It is an invitation from mother after all. When mother invites, one must go.

Right? I do not have any ill intention. I must go since my friend’s mother invited.

And so, after inviting Rahsa as well, we headed towards Eliza’s house.

“Actually, this is my first time going to Eliza-san’s house. Our fathers see each other every day but it isn’t like our families are on good terms. But still, I have seen the prime minister’s house from afar a few times and it was quite a wonderful house.”

I wonder what kind of a house it is. There being a lot of nobles in the capital, I had seen quite a lot of luxurious houses but since Rahsa is also praising it, it must surely be amazing.

As for what I thought.... It was quite normal.

It wasn’t that different from our house, the rooms were not that large and the garden wasn’t that big either.

Eh? What is the amazing part then?—I thought.

Is the price of the land high or something?

“Aniki, you look kinda curious. You probably don’t know what is amazing about it yet.”

Rahsa said happily. Tell me quick.

“This place, you see, has been passed on since the time of the first prime minister. It does not look that extraordinary but only the prime minister succeeds this house and even if you are royalty, you are not permitted to walk in without permission. It is a place full of history. Wonderful, isn’t it?”

I-I see.... Cool. Like a brand power or something?

“Is it okay to touch... the bell?”

“Of course. They do not have any reason to reject visitors.”

We-well, then....

After knowing that info just now, I kinda feel nervous about just pressing the bell.

.....The bell wasn’t anything extraordinary either, not something which would bring about fairies or anything... really, a very average bell. Even my house is probably using a better one.

“Who might you people be?”

A voice said from the otherside of the gate. A man... probably someone who works here.

“Probably the butler who has been working for the prime minister generation after generation. He is extremely skillful and famous.”

Rahsa said he didn’t come here once but he seems to know quite a bit. Does that mean this guy is famous even in the capital?

“I am Kururi Helan. I received invitation from Tsukimi-sama and as such....”

And suddenly, I had a bad flashback.

“I am really sorry to say but Tsukimi-sama has not returned for more than a week so I do not know of what you are talking about.”

Like I thought!!!

The second tragedy after coming to the capital! I wanted to visit my friend’s house but couldn’t get in, part 2!!!

“Well, it is Tsukimi-sama we are talking about after all...”

Rahsa said while giving a bitter smile, being perceptive. Experienced?! So Rahsa has already been through it...

“What shall we do?”

“How about changing it to you coming to visit your friend, Eliza-san? One doesn’t need an appointment to visit a friend.”

Eh? Well, not like I am against that or anything?

But, you know, just wait a bit, just a little. I need some time to be mentally prepared.

Just a bit, okay?

“Because of Tsukimi-sama, things like these happen frequently. I am very sorry. Then, I shall call Eliza-sama, please wait a moment.”

What a polite person. I wonder if he too is being abused by Tsukimi-san.

After a while, the butler came back. He still did not open the gate.

“Kururi-dono, Eliza-sama will welcome you personally but she has asked for you to wait a bit as she needs a little time. I also have a message for you. She had failed while making chiffon cake and dirtied her clothes. And she wants to welcome you with a proper dress so please wait a while.”

And so, we were not let in again.

“Aniki, I think I can smell sweet potatoes from inside, do you think she is making something?”

“No, I am also getting the scent of it. Probably roasted potato. It’s completely like Eliza to make sweet potatoes on a cold day like this. And I am jealous.”

“Aniki, that is kinda rude to Eliza-san. It is obvious someone else is frying them. That very noble-like Eliza-san wouldn’t be frying something like potatoes. And besides, the butler also said she was cooking chiffon cake.”

Fuu, so young you are, Rahsa.

“Yes, that is exactly correct. My master is making ‘chiffon cake’. An attendant is ‘frying potatoes’.”

Uwah, even the butler. Too suspicious. I can totally tell he is trying to cover up

for her.

"I am pretty sure Eliza is the one frying the potatoes since she loves potatoes, though..."

".... Actually, being a butler, I thought it would be bad to say that I was the one frying potatoes. Because it would sabotage my job. I made a mistake trying to blame it on the attendant but, fufufu, it was me who was eating it."

He even sold himself?! So skilled! This person is definitely the ideal butler.

Sorry for going so deep.

"....Butler-san also has a playful side, eh?"

"Yes, being a man, I cannot forget my playful side."

Sorry for degrading you to an unfaithful butler.

"Aniki, looks like he is quite an affectionate butler, huh?"

Rahsa said in a low voice.

I guess I will just keep it at that.

"Flotar, open the gate."

I could hear a sound of someone walking fast and immediately after, Eliza's pretty voice. It looks like she has finally come, after taking care of the 'mess'. Haven't met her in a whi.... Or I guess I did.

Flotar is probably the butler's name. As he got the sign, the gate opened.

In front of the residence, there was the white haired butler lowering himself, and deep in front of the entrance, about 3 steps high, a pretty girl wearing a red dress. A gorgeous, graceful, and with a somewhat kind aura, Eliza stood there.

"Kururi-sama, thank you for coming. Ara, also prince Rahsa. I welcome you both... However, it is not much gentlemen-like to suddenly appear at a girl's house. A girl needs some time to prepare, you know?"

So many secrets to a maiden.

I am sorry. But it was your dear mother who trapped us. Next time, I will come after you are done with the potatoes.

After bowing politely, Eliza gave an unusually bright smile like a young girl... Is it okay to take it as welcoming us? Well, it's not like she isn't like this, right?I guess it is okay if I just know that.

Eliza came close step by step.

What shall I talk about? I am glad Rahsa is here too. Stop beating so much, my heart.

As my pounding got faster, Eliza was also getting closer.

Hmm?

I thought her dress up was perfect but... Hmm? Isn't something there on her lips...?

Hmm? Thereit is. This... potato!

So you were eating?!

I knew you were hurrying with the clean ups but you were eating?! That is unexpected!!

If you dressed up so perfectly, you should also notice your mouth! Or is it that you ate it after dressing up?! It would be a waste so you ate it just like that!?

Look! Even Flotar-san with a somewhat lower sight has noticed it too!

His complexion is turning really pale too! A person with such composure is shaking like that!

His hands-his hands are also becoming fidgety while he keeps unnaturally wiping his face.

“Flotar, what happened? You’re being unlike yourself.”

You’re going to just say it?! Eliza-san, please notice! Notice the real intention behind his gesture!

I can understand Flotar-san being stricken by despair. I kinda want to apologize to him.

“Eliza-san, you have chiffon cake stuck to your mouth. You are an unexpectedly careless person, I see.”

Rahsa!! Rahsa came in like an angel!!! That is a potato, though. Thank you for misunderstanding it as chiffon cake. Because of your innocence, everyone here was saved.

Eliza immediately ran inside the residence.

Flotar-san also immediately stood in front of us.

“Please wait a while.” was all he said. He didn’t say anymore but the pressure was something else.

I feel like I heard him say ‘Biggest failure of my life’ in a low voice. It is not your fault. It is Eliza’s fault. No, the society is wrong to think potatoes are not a noble-like food. Nobody here is at fault!

Eliza came back. With a bright red face.

It is completely fine with me but even if I say that, no, if I say that she would worry even more. Well, our relation is still unripe. I don’t know if it will ever be ripe but I do want to say some time in the future that I knew. And that it is completely fine to eat potatoes until she is satisfied.

“Hohhohoho, hhohohho, to let chiffon cake get stuck to my face, how silly of me!”

Eliza-san?! Did you always laugh like that?!

“My lady! Seriously, so careless. I did know that you are weak to chiffon cakes, though!”

What?! What is with this big drama between this young lady and butler!?

“.....Eliza really likes chiffon cake, huh! Seriously, you’re everyone’s idol in school so get yourself together!”

We were the reason it all started so I guess I will play along with this drama here.

“Hahhahahaha, you’re exactly right! Miss, please be careful!”

“Ohhohho, ye-yes! I shall do that!”

“.....Everyone, isn’t that enough? I feel cold so can we get inside already?”

Because of an angel called Rahsa, this hellish drama did not go on any longer.

However, the atmosphere did not change. Saying 'It is not much but please have this tea.' she gave us super high quality tea, which we all silently drank. It was so silent that even the gulping sound also echoed.

And like this, the visit to the pretty girl's house closed curtains in a disappointing way.

Let me just say this at the end, nobody was at fault. That the society is at fault.

Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 26

Having remembered that I had received an invitation from Zeni Geba to visit his blacksmith company, I decided to head there. It seems to be the 2nd biggest blacksmith company coming after the Iron Brain's company. On top of that, it seems to be the most earning blacksmith company. One can feel his talent and resolution from it.

The exterior of the building was completely different from those surrounding it. It was close to the nobles' city but was not even inferior in quality from the nobles' buildings. It reflected Zeni Geba's business policy.

"It's been awhile since we were alone together, huh?"

Because Iris said such startling things, I ended up stumbling as I was getting off the carriage. It's a result of my usual training that I did not fall.... Well, I do not actually do any training so it's probably my luck? I didn't do any good deeds either so..... Coincidence it is.

Iris has an off day today.

Rahsa seemed busy recently so I took her out. Unusually, even prince Arch wasn't with Iris. There's no way that person is not aware of Iris' off days.... Did he have that much of an emergency?

"It somehow doesn't feel like a smithy, does it?"

They seem to have a few branches but the building in front of our eyes, the main shop, was as Iris said, not like the usual smithies I know. Even if someone were to tell me this was a jewel shop, I would believe it. It is surely filled with soot deep within but the entrance and outward appearance are no short of beautiful.

"Oya, if it isn't The Great Dancer. You came. And the person along you also seems like a true dancer, a lively, pretty lady."

As we entered the shop, we met Zeni Geba at the counter, calculating money. As his alias suggests, it seems he is good at counting money. His hair was back-brushed, making him look like a 30 year old intellectual. He was looking exactly

as he did at the meeting.

Handing over work to the employees, he came to welcome us. What a nice person.

“Good gracious, I had thought a lot of customers are coming today but this is quite the important customer.”

“Well, we are not customers, though.”

He said he would show me something interesting so I decided to come. I also told that to Iris.

“To me, customers are everyone who will bring me profit in the future. As long as it is possible you will give me good inspiration, to me, you are a customer.”

“I see... But, today, I think we will be the ones gaining. You did say you will show me something rare.”

“Yes. I have it prepared. Or rather, it is a project I have been working on for quite a while. I wanted to show that to you.”

I feel like he just gave a daring smile. As someone like him is saying that with confidence, I feel like I can look forward to this thing he wants to show me. Talking about rare things, there's also one more of those. It seems like Iris also has quite a bit of interest in this field. Her eyes looking at the goods on display are somewhat different from the normal person; They are shining. Now then, I wonder if she found anything worth.

We were guided to the guest room. They even got us some high-quality tea.

All of these facilities wouldn't be at a normal blacksmith. You could even call it a miracle if you are served tea.

“It does seem like you have a lot of customers who are nobles. Are all these facilities made for nobles?”

“Yes, you are correct. I think the age of judging a battle from one's strength has already become old. One of the reasons we are prospering is because we destroyed that old concept.”

If you have time to worry about the shop's appearance then you should be

polishing your skills!—It looks like there are a lot of those stubborn blacksmiths who would say that and consider this as heresy but since it is succeeding, I guess there is not one single right way of going about it.

“The days where one needs to use a sword everyday is limited. Most of the nobles prefer the looks rather than the good or bad parts of the sword. There are also some who think it disgraceful to walk in dirty shops. Our shop also meets those needs. Well, we don’t have any product which is not up to the mark, though.”

I felt like the things this person talked about made sense. There are also quite a lot of people wanting such a shop. It was a good experience, getting to hear senpai’s opinion but... It is a little different from the kind of work I want to do.

I want to make something which would be worth of being called the ‘real thing’. Even if it’s high priced, I want to make something which would be passed down generation after generation. Even if the swords do not have shining ornaments or decorations, I want to battle with things which the right person will understand. I wonder if that also makes me a part of the blacksmiths with the old way of thinking.

“It looks like The Great Dancer would not like this path.”

“Did it show on my face?”

“No, but I am good at perceiving my customer’s mood. Looks like your companion also does not like it. I think it would be pretty popular to women, though...”

Iris is also not satisfied? Even though she was looking at the products so passionately. Zeni Geba was certainly a big business man, being sharp in that sense.

“No, I think I like Kururi’s swords more.”

I really love that honest part about her but it makes me kinda nervous if that is said before the person in question.

As expected of you, Iris-san.

“Yes, in terms of quality, I think The Great Dancer is undoubtedly above me.

Among the Ten Excellence, I think I am at the bottom. But, people have different sense of values and there are more of them saying my swords are the best. I can just do my business with people like that. And so, you don't need to feel sorry, The Great Dancer."

Looks like my feelings are totally being read. Even still, he is such a light person. Normally, I think it is pretty natural for one to be a little upset if their skill is doubted.

"You see, I don't have such a soft heart to be hurt by every single thing I hear. But the reason I have been able to climb this high is also because I do not like losing. No matter how much money I earn, I, too feel like looking from the top as a blacksmith. But, it is also a fact that I can already see my limit."

"Something like that..."

"Does exist. However, I also do not think it is impossible to cross it if one uses their head. The rare thing... which I wanted to show you, is the answer to that."

Zeni Geba's face was lively all the way. His secret, the rare thing which he wants to show me..

"From here on, we will enter the secret area. It is still not known to the public."

Deep, deep within the shop, we were guided in. I did think it was a big shop but exactly how many doors have we crossed till now?

We arrived at a place which, at a glance, looked like a normal smithy. I could not spot anything worth calling a secret.

"There is no secret in the place. It is what we are doing, me and three other disciples of mine. That sword you see over there, do you not have a weird feeling when you see it?"

There was a completed sword hung on the wall.

What is different.... Ah, is it....

""There is magic flowing in it?""

Iris and I both noticed together. There was magic flowing within that sword.

“Yes, exactly. As expected of nobles, you know magic well. There is magic flowing in it. Why? Because there is a magic gem inserted in it.”

“A magic gem in a sword?”

I don’t know that much about magic gems but I do understand that they are worn. Inserting that in a sword? Sure, it is quite rare.

“I realized my limits faster than anyone else. Now when I look back at it, that was probably better. With my skill, it is impossible to surpass the Iron Heart or the other members. But, that is only if we walk the same path.”

“From what you are saying, is a sword with magic flowing in it that strong?”

“Yes, it is that strong.”

He took the sword which was hanging on the wall and another normal one.

The normal one’s quality seemed better. He collided them with each other. The one which broke and went flying was.... The normal one. Even though it was supposed to be better in terms of quality.

“This is the power of a sword with magic flowing in it. You could tell which one was better in terms of quality, right? But as you can see, this is the result.”

“.....How do I say this.. It’s amazing. It really is amazing. Not only in business, you seem to be a genius in smithing as well.”

I am honestly surprised. To think something like this existed. And Zeni Geba’s imagination which thought this up is also something else.

“But, was it okay showing it to us? You haven’t even commercialized it yet.”

“I do not mind. Of course, you are free to make it when you go back. However, I think you can’t make something worthy of selling at all.”

“Is there some sort of a secret to it?”

“Of course. There is the need to create a magical circuit inside the iron—but that, is the hard part. You will understand if you try. When this is commercialized and is out in the market, there will probably be a lot of blacksmiths who will come to this path. And, even in this field, someone will overcome me. Especially someone like you. However, that is okay in itself. That

is my limit, after all. What is important is my name will be left in history as the person who made this magic sword, and that is all that matters.”

I see. Leaving his name as the inventor...

Certainly, he has not been able to make that good of a sword with it and so if he hurriedly tries to commercialize it, that might not be good. If there is an amazing, regular sword which is as good as it is, it will not be taken seriously.

Only after it surpasses the best sword currently available will it bring meaning. And so, as I can't get into that field for a while, he felt it was okay to let me know.

“Is this the best sword you could make at the moment?”

I looked at the lively magic sword which destroyed the other one.

“This is not the best per se but in the first place, it is difficult to make them usable so this in itself is quite good.”

He snapped his fingers and after awhile, a young employee came in with a sword. I wondered if it was one of the disciples who know how to make the magic sword.

“This is what my disciple made. Magic is flowing in it but...”

He showed us by swinging the blade. After a few swings, the sword snapped. There was a huge difference between this one and the one he showed earlier. If it snapped just by swinging in the air, it can't really be practically used.

“Even my disciple took three years to make this. It is that difficult. There is no one except me who can make one which is usable.”

“Three years...”

To think it took even longer than the time I spent training under my teacher.

This is the best disciples result.

“Have you been doing it for 3 years as well?”

“I am doing it for about 4 years now. After I got to form a shape in my mind, I also told my disciples. It was after 3 years I was able to make something usable. I am working on increasing the quality now. If I am able to make a sword with

magic circuit and use all my skills on it, I can rise up to the top at once. Don't you think so?"

I do. It is an amazing technique. I also got excited. I also want to try making one as fast as possible. To think there still was something as amazing as this. I wish I came earlier. I can't help it now, though. Instead of regretting, I should be thankful I met him now.

"You will surpass me one day. But, I will take the lead for these few years. Of course, my disciples might also lead."

"Um, can I take my leave now?"

"Ah, you must be wanting to go and start making one right away."

"Iris, sorry. And so, I would like to go back right now, is that okay with you?"

I am so sorry to her for bringing her and then even leaving for my convenience. But, Iris permitted it with a smile.

"I like that side of Kururi more. That lively side. Can I also be present while you make that magic sword?"

Of course!"

We hurried back. On the way back, I purchased some magic gems from the store Rahsa introduced me to. A magic gem which will increase sturdiness. It is normally worn to protect oneself from wounds but I will use it to increase the sturdiness of a sword.

After coming back to the castle, I realized, 'Is there even a smithy here?' and so when I asked Supatifila-san, she answered that there is one. There is? That is surprising.

"Don't tell me, Kururi-sama is going to work?!!"

"What is with that super unexpected overreaction...."

"Kururi-sama will do work while Iris-sama is having a day off?!!"

"You don't need to reaffirm it. Also, don't compare with Iris."

When compared with Iris, majority of the human race will be considered lazy.

The smithy at the castle was needlessly huge and clean. It isn't used much, is

it?

I lit the fire. After finishing the maintenance of all the tools, when the place was starting to warm up, I started processing the iron and magic gem.

The magic gem's magic easily enters a person's body but it seems like it has a characteristic which makes it difficult to insert into inanimate things. And iron among all things, was unexpectedly more incompatible. However, there are rare metals, which would let the magic flow easily. There is a need to use those as materials and that is quite bothersome.

That rare metal is actually fragile, making it harder to process and on top of all that, is more likely to become rusty. It is famous for being scrap iron. If one were to buy it, it would be with really low amount of money.

To do this, I will need to make it by mixing two irons, this one with the magic flowing in it as the core, and the better one on the outer layer.

And this mixing seems to be quite a hard task to accomplish since it took Zeni Geba 3 years to complete.

Now then, let's see how long it will take me. Let's go about it patiently. I am sure I will be able to complete it one day, as well.

I went on forging the iron which will have the magic flow through it as the wick. Next, I pound a higher quality metal on top. As of now... it was somehow going quite smoothly.

The blade's forging was done and all that was left was to connect the body. After creating a place to insert the magic gem in the body and putting it in, it will be complete.

.....Certainly, it is quite difficult.... But, I feel like I was able to put out about 80% of my skill. But, if I take the magic into account, isn't there no difference between this and the ones I normally make?

No, that is surely not it. It won't go that well.

Finishing something in 1 day that took Zeni Geba 3 years to finish is certainly not possible.

"This is from my amateur eyes but I think it is made really well."

Iris, who had been watching over closely, had said after I completed the sword.

Haha, you really are an amateur. Of course it can't go that well. I am a chick among chicks in this field. Cheep cheep. In a situation where even the husk of the shell is not broken. Ahh, I see. You are trying to make me feel good. But was Iris someone who would do that?

"I don't think it is that good. I just put my hand on it, not even an amateur."

"Really? It looks really good, though..."

You will compliment me that much?

Right, I will know once I use it.

It might break into pieces after one swing. No, that is probably what is going to happen. Surely, even Iris will accept that.

.....No matter how many times I swung, it didn't seem like it would break. Arere? That is weird.

This is really weird. I am starting to sweat.

"Doesn't seem like it will break."

".....Right."

I mean, after all, the more I swung, the more it got accustomed to the magic and was increasingly shining?! This is not good.

Right, I will know once I use it in a real battle. It is definitely not something which can be used yet.

I will know once someone uses it.

But before that, I can't make someone use inferior goods so a little test. I exchanged some blows with Iris with the magic sword while she was using one of the guards' sword. I can't make Iris use such an incomplete product so I should use the magic sword.

.....I ended up breaking it to pieces. The guard's sword, that is. Ah, I need to compensate. What is this sword? It is too much of a sword, I am scared.

Barely–Really barely, seems like it can be used in practice. However, I am

pretty sure it's resistance is no good. Yes, that's right. I just made one sword after all. There's no way I would be able to make such a good one right from the start.

I headed to the hunter Galdomira-san whom we met during our first monster hunt. I decided to grant him the sword I made awhile ago for free.

"Oh? You sure? Or does it come with some shady history?"

"It isn't something like that. Please use it to your fullest and let me know your thoughts later. That is all. But, I am sure it will be useless pretty soon."

"What? I don't quite understand properly but from the looks of it, it doesn't seem bad. Swords are consumable goods, I am grateful. I will let you know my impressions after using it."

It will probably be complaints instead of impressions, though. Well then, I look forward to your complaints.

....., After a few days, what came was, 'It is amazing!! That sword is amazing!! Too amazing!!!' such a letter which was half-filled with 'amazing!!'. He also asked if it was really okay for him to have it but I gave it to him so it's no problem there. I can't tell him to give it back now. But, there should be some fault. I just replied saying I don't mind if he is really careful while using it.

.....I can't stop sweating. This is weird, everything about it is weird.

Ah, right, it's probably the beginner's luck. Surely. No doubt. That is it.

After that, I got news from Zeni Geba.

'Since it is you, you have probably been forging since that day, right? Won't you let me see the results?'. Actually, I got scared after that and didn't make any.

'So you only worked one day....' muttered Supatifila-san and that was the end of it.

Right, I probably can't make it properly the 2nd time. Besides, Zeni Geba can

probably find flaws when I show it to him.

“Alright, I will make one more.”

“At last. Kururi, you were kinda scared after that so I am happy you are resuming.”

I was afraid? Well, there certainly were some waves in my feelings.

When I said I would go to the smithy, Supatifila-san almost fainted.

“Don’t tell me, you are going to work again?!!?”

What does she think of me? She probably thinks no more of me than a good-for-nothing who luckily got close to her respectable master.

Calming myself down, I tried making my second magic sword.

Certainly, it was quite difficult....

.....Arere? This is weird... I was able to put most of my skills into it?!!

It would be a pretty good sword even if magic wasn’t flowing in it?!! This!! If I consider magic flowing in it, isn’t this the very best sword I have made up till now?!

No, that is probably my misunderstanding. Yes, I should hear Zeni Geba’s opinion on it.

“.....Uu.”

His hands were shaking. He was even leaking a groaning voice. His nose was dripping. His feet were trembling. He couldn’t stop trembling and hold back his groan, with his nose still running, he said,

“Amazing..... But, you still have ways to go!”

“Right. I still have ways to go, right?”

“.....This sword, can I have it? No, I will properly pay for it.”

“Ah, no. I received the idea from you so please have it. It isn’t something I can sell yet either.”

“So this is not something you can put on sale..... A sword with high sturdiness. If we were thinking in terms of that, I don’t think a sword like this exists in this

world..."

His hands were shaking. He was even leaking a groaning voice. His nose was dripping. His feet were trembling. He couldn't stop trembling and hold back his groan. Also, his nose was still running.

There isn't another like it?"

But that shouldn't be the case...

If that's so, then isn't it perfect for the knight's leader? But, I still don't understand. How was I able to do it so well? Honestly, I, myself, might be losing sight of my own talent the most.

And so, I came to know later that—

Talent is something which has a kind of poison in it.

That is probably how it is to others.

I shouldn't have shown that sword to Zeni Geba. And if so, what do you want me to do?

At the end, I was not able to believe in myself. If I had believed in myself and did not cling to his words, I wouldn't have made him go mad.....

Translations by [AsianHobbyist](#) Website **Chapters are split into pages**

锻冶職人を目指す

没落予定なので、

著
CK
かわく

カドカワBOOKS



Botsuraku Youtei

Volume 4 Chapter 27

The castle was busier than usual. They say there's a calm before the storm but it seems this time the storm came suddenly. Who might be in the middle of this storm...

“Supatifila-san, exactly what is going on?”

The castle was really busy from the morning and I also felt weird not seeing Rahsa for awhile so I asked the woman standing still beside us.

“I can't really say anything but let's just say an important person is coming.”

“Important person? I won't tell anyone so tell me.”

“I can't do that.”

“I am also kinda curious.”

Iris was also curious about Rahsa since he was nowhere to be seen for the past few days.

“.....If Iris-sama asks that much, I guess I have no choice. I shall tell you.”

Why?! Is there that much of a difference between Iris and me?! And what do you mean ‘that much’? She didn't say much at all!

I was super aware of it but isn't this weird?!

“The head of the Dartanel house and their son is coming. They have been asking for quite the impossible request for quite a while but since both parent and son are coming now, they might be trying to push that request again.”

“What request?”

“I can't say.”

“Please.”

“.....If Iris-sama asks that much then.”

Objection! It seems like we need to settle this!

“They have been appealing to the king to hand over the prime minister’s post to them. Deauville-sama is really capable himself, so the king thinks there is no need to change him but since they are coming again, they might have seen a chance or something. And so both prince Rahsa and prince Arch had to go to the official place.”

“Why didn’t he tell us about it?”

“He probably did not want to get you involved.”

If my memory serves me right, Eliza’s father is doing something bad behind everyone’s backs. If they come pressing that and applying economical pressure as well, I feel they might just succeed. It isn’t about Rahsa getting us involved, since we are kinda related to it in the first place. At last, it looks the climax of life is here.

I also want to be present there. It is something I am related to. At the very least, I want to be there.

And so, while I was thinking that, a familiar knight face entered the room as if the heavens wished it.



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It was the first knight I met with when I went to their barracks before.

“Kururi Helan-sama, you are being summoned at the audience. Please come along with me.”

“Me....?”

“Yes, you.”

I am related but I am not supposed to be related to it directly so why?

It seems like Supatifila-san also did not understand what was going on.

I could not feel anything except anxiety but since I had also been wanting to be there myself, I guessed I would go along.

It was at the king’s hall. The place used for official audience. It is not a place the general public can enter. Of course, I have not entered it once either.

After being properly inspected to see if I was carrying a weapon with me or not, I was guided into the place, without having any knowledge.

The actors had already gathered in the hall.

At the very deep throne, sat the king. At his sides, stood the two princes and the prime minister, Eyan Deaville.

A little further from them, stood the parent and child. I guess it is Dartanel house’s parent and child.

On both sides of the passage to the throne, knights stood in a line with the parent and child in between. Even the knight leader’s huge figure was also there. I guess injuring the royalties here would be impossible. Although, I don’t think anyone with that intention exists here. Even if they were, I can’t see anyway they could do it.

I was guided beside the Dartanel house’s head. Was it okay to stand here?

“Well then, looks like all the needed faces have gathered. Let’s get into it.”

Said the man on the throne. In other words, the king but.... I know that person. Definitely. Yes, I know him!!

This is the worst. That person is the person I slid the floors of the bathroom with, talked about Iris being cute with and also the person who told me all about the capital’s army. I can’t forget him. It is definitely that old man whom I

slid with together. I can't possibly forget that blonde head. So prince Arch's blonde hair was from his father....

"Ah...."

I ended up saying that unintentionally. Was it just me, or did the king's eyes looking at me feel like they were teasing me?

"First, I would like to thank the king, for giving me and my son some time!"

The person with good physique standing next to me said with a loud voice. Was he the top of a business or something? As expected from a merchant, he has a good voice.

"That's fine. However, my sons, and moreover, my red-haired guest is not exactly full of time so just say what you wanted to."

Red-haired guest? I guess that's me. Ah, that's a relief, I am a guest... but Brau Dartanel summoned me? Why?

"Then I shall do just that!"

Now that I look closely, the stupid son standing next to this man, hmm? I know him as well. It is the person who sent that letter the other day. The person respecting and admiring me. Furthermore, I know this guy from even before.

It's the unfortunate guy who got beat up by Iris at the masquerade ball. So it's that hopeless person, eh? No wonder Rahsa wouldn't like him. He also confronted prince Arch...

Exactly what did this important Dartanel people come here for? Is it that request Supatifila-san was talking about? Then I should side with Eyan Deaville at any cost. I don't sympathize with him or anything but Eliza is already an important person to me. I shall fight as much as I can to protect her as well.

"Firstly, that fox wearing a human's mask standing beside the king. I can't help but feel anxious leaving the country's politics to a fox. There's also a rumour that the neighboring country, Ammrare is making some kind of a move. You must not leave such an incompetent prime minister by your side for so

long.”

A sudden, super frank claim. So much that I fear it will turn into a fight. I could tell that a blood vessel twitched on Deaville’s face.

“Eyan Deaville is a man I deemed worthy and put him by my side. Even without your opinion, I do not think my judgement is wrong.”

“Is that really so? The king is a very generous person to normal people’s deeds. But even if it’s something small to the king, it might not be so for weak citizens like myself. There are many government officials carrying out many evil deeds. Especially, Eyan Deaville-dono is the representative evil person among them”

As I expected, he did go there. Eliza’s papa did not change his expressions but he probably has quite a lot to think about this. I request you to keep your poker face just like that.

“You are not weak, are you?”

“No, no, in this place, I only feel like a weak, weak, baby rabbit surrounded by wild animals.

“.....Fine. More importantly, do you have proof of Eyan doing anything evil? I can’t help but see your one-sided claims as selfish desires.”

“Yes... Of course—or so I wanted to say but as expected of the prime minister, he wouldn’t let me get a lead on him. Let’s just say it’s only a matter of time. Sooner or later, I will get evidence and show you.”

“I see.... For someone requesting for the prime minister’s post so much, that was quite the powerless claim.”

“I am afraid so. I am not such a greedy person. I just have the confidence I could do better than others. If you were to leave it to me, I would show you by developing this country just as I did with my business. It is an appeal for my love of my country.”

Then, exactly what did these guys come to do? The prime ministers post should be pretty solid still....

“Your majesty, of course that was the first thing I wanted to say but I have

another important matter to discuss today. Please, give me a little bit of your time.”

“I don’t think you will leave without any results, just say it.”

Ahem!—he cleared his throat. Looks like this is the main part.

“Sorry to have called you, Kururi Helan-dono.”

“.....Eh? Me?”

The king and Brau were having a conversation till now but here he suddenly swings it onto me. Perhaps, I will become the key to this matter? If so, I should be careful of what I say.

“Yes. I am very grateful for having some of your time, next head of the Helan territory. However, today, I must talk in front of His Majesty about your crime.”

If I did not hear it wrong, did he just say crime?

My crime? Is it that my cheeks are too charming? I guess my buttocks being jellylike is also quite sinful.

“Your Majesty! Today, I would like to inform you all of how dangerous this person, Kururi Helan is!”

“So that’s what you are after. You are talking about the next head of the Helan territory and an important guest of the castle, choose your words wisely. Otherwise, you do know who will be the one committing a crime, correct? Now, speak.”

The king said something which could even be thought of as a threat. But despite that, the man called Brau and his son showed no signs of panic. Exactly why am I being the one targeted as a whole here... I didn’t do anything underhanded. My father.... Surely not, right?! It looks like the king is also siding with me. Rahsa looked at me worriedly. Prince Arch... I don’t know what he is doing. I wonder if he will save me from a pinch? I don’t quite understand a person’s feelings.

“Kururi Helan-dono’s crime, actually, it is a very primitive crime but, he is a very ferocious, uncivilized man. My son has been beaten up by him the other

day. From what I hear, it was a very one-sided fight..."

Ahh, that.... His face was covered in blood, after all. But, it wasn't me who did it, you know? Besides, we have justice on our side.

I raised my hand.

To state my opinion.

"Speak."

"Thank you. It is true that I beat him. However, a few important information have been omitted. As because Fregen Dartanel-dono forcibly tried to take away my friend, Iris, I had to use some force to stop that."

"Do you have anything to say to that?"

"I can't think of my son doing such a thing. I might be taken as a doting parent but my son is very polite and popular among girls as well. Everyday, I get about 10 marriage proposals from beautiful ladies for my son. So I can't think of him fixating on one lady and trying to kidnap her. Moreover, from what I heard, this Iris girl is the eldest daughter of a very poor family. Is it not more natural to think she tried to gain money and fame by getting close to my son?"

"Iris isn't that kind of a person!!"

Translations by [AsianHobbyist](#) Website

Chapters are split into pages

I lost my cool. If you want to accuse me of any crimes, then just do so. There is no need to say such things about her.

“Is that so? Even being a commoner, she entered a noble special academy. I can’t help but think she had ulterior motives.”

“She entered normally. There was a chance so she just went for it. Isn’t it because Brau-dono is the one who keeps thinking like that that you think others also think like the same?”

“.....Hmph! Impertinent!”

Provoking eyes and speech. I feel like I would explode with anger but I need to endure it here. If I am not calm they will think I am someone they can lead by the nose.

“My son’s two front teeth and cheekbones were broken by him. I also have the official report from the doctor.”

Showing it to the king, his son also showed his teeth with a smile. His front two teeth were replaced with golden ones.... Was Iris’ kick that strong?

“Fregen started attacking first.”

“Where is the evidence? From the looks of it, there does not seem to be any injuries on Kururi Helan-dono. If boys fight properly, surely the result wouldn’t be this one sided. My son did not resist and got violently beaten. There are other eyewitnesses as well. If needed, shall I call them as well?”

“Very convenient witnesses you have.”

The king spoke for me. Seems like he probably remembers us sliding on the bath floor.

“It seems like Your Majesty is supporting Kururi Helan but this person is very dangerous. He committed an heartless act of violence unbefitting of someone who will carry this country in the future. I can’t help but be worried about the people. He made my son like this, please give him appropriate punishment.”

The king was silent for awhile. It seemed like he was pondering something. Maybe about my punishment? If so, that is bad. I don’t feel the slightest guilt for my actions, after all. If I am punished, it would be pretty hard to live on in the society.

“Your one-sided claim is so forced I do not feel like believing it at all. Even as it is, you are good at cooking up tales. Unfortunately, I can’t believe that convenient witness of yours either.”

“I see.....”

“Kururi Helan is not guilty. I can’t see anything other than that.”

“Haa, if Your Majesty says that, then so it is...”

Justice exists. In this country, in this king, there is justice. I will live on properly in this country. Somehow, I felt really happy.

“I did not want to say this but, since it has come to this, I can’t help it. It might make Kururi Helan-dono’s crime heavier but I have to bring it up.”

I thought he had accepted defeat but as if he came back to life, he came accusing me again. In fact, his face said this is where it starts.

“First, may I bring in the piece of evidence?”



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“If it is needed, then so be it.”

“Thank you, I have someone holding it just outside the hall. Bring it in!”

The big heavy door opened and a short man came in with something covered in a long cloth. After handing it over to Brau, he immediately left.

“Everyone, please look at this.”

The thing he brought out from inside the cloth was a sword. That is....

“It is a sword. Knights, please do not be so cautious. I can’t use a sword at all. First, I want everyone to look at this sword. It is a very rare famous sword.”

They were very cautious. One of the knights also drew his sword but was stopped by the king.

“What of it? Certainly, it is a very well made sword from the looks of it.”

“First, do you remember this sword, Kururi Helan-dono?”

Remember or anything...

“It is a sword I made.”

“Yes, exactly. You are an extremely skilled person. From what I heard, you are also in the Blacksmiths Ten Excellence.”

“And what of it?”

“This sword, do you remember giving it to someone?”

“To another member of the Ten Excellence, Zeni Geba. It was a sword I made using his techniques so to show my gratitude, I gave it to him.”

“That is enough. Not much different from the investigation. Your Majesty, the before mentioned person, Zeni Geba— Saishin Ubstol-dono, is now in the

capital's biggest prison, Kudan prison."

Zeni Geba is in prison?! Why?!

"Saishin Ubstol. I have heard that name before. If I am not wrong, he is a very skilled businessman. Why is such a person in prison?"

So the king also knows him. Now that I think about it, they were talking about him getting the noble position before. Why is such a skilled and blessed person in prison?

"It seems like Saishin Ubstol has killed one of his disciples. With this sword!"

The sword he showed was the magic sword I had completed before. He killed a disciple... Zeni Geba....

"This sword, from what I heard, is not just a normal sword. It has a magic gem inside and magic flows within it. Magic gems are normally worn. Using that power on a sword is an original idea. At a glance, it seems like a really good idea but from what I have heard from Saishin Ubstol, when he swung this sword, it seems his heart was mislead. A man blessed by both skill and money, suddenly cut his precious disciple. Of course, he was accused of the crime but do you not think the person who made this sword also bears the crime? At the very least, misleading hearts is an extremely vicious crime in my opinion."

".....Well, this is another talk of a shapeless, superstitious belief."

It is exactly as the king had said. Even I didn't understand what was going on. Mislead hearts? My sword did that? There is no way. There is no such magic flowing in it and I didn't even put such feelings into it. There is simply no way. Something like that....

"Many people know how well of a person Saishin Ubstol is. So much that there is no need for a witness. Moreover, he has been seen by an employee holding the bloodied sword after cutting his disciple. Even he admits it, so there is no room for doubt. This sword definitely misleads a person's heart. It has demon's magic inside it. Kururi Helan-dono also excels at magic so I do not think it is something impossible for him."

"Even if you accuse so irrationally... Are you really saying Zeni Geba—Saishin Ubstol-dono's heart was mislead?!"

"Yes, we don't need any evidence for this either as he himself has stated it to the guards. Of course, there is an official record of it as well."

"That's impossible! It can't be! It just can't! There is no way..."

There is no way such a thing could happen. I was just, just too entranced to make a sword with a new technique. Something like misleading hearts... I don't know, does something like that really exist? Can something like that happen as a side effect? This is bad.. I am starting to lose confidence..

"Kururi-dono, do you think it is a coincidence?"

".....Of course it is. There is no definite proof of it or anything. There is no way something like this could happen."

"Then, I shall ask you. This magic sword, how many of these have you made?"

"Two. That's all."

"And where is the other one?"

"I gave it to a hunter I know. His name is-"

"That's enough. The hunter's name is Gardomira. He, too, is in Kudan prison. Being possessed by the magic sword, he cut his ally. He denies his crime but there is no way something like that is a coincidence when it happened in such a short period of time."

".....That can't be.."

Even Gardomira-san? Why did he too cut his ally?! He was a good person!

Why? This is a lie, I just, I just wanted to make a good sword.

There is no way it could happen.

"We can't say anything unless we look at the evidence. This talk is temporarily suspended. Kururi Helan, you are to standby at the interrogation room."

It was an order from the king who was supporting me till now. I have no choice but to obey. None of the princes opened their mouths. I wondered what they were thinking? Were they disappointed in me? If so....

Only I left the place early.

I waited together with the assigned knight at the interrogation room. There was no conversation. I didn't even feel like talking.

I don't remember how long I had waited. But it seemed like things were indeed progressing.

"Kururi Helan-dono. Your punishment has been decided. As there were plenty evidence of it and the crime being very likely, you are to be imprisoned at Kudan prison temporarily. However, your crime has not been decided officially. There will be a need for more evidence. Next, the official judgement will be given at trial. Until then, you will be imprisoned."

I did not do anything that would make me feel ashamed of myself. But even still, it seems like I will be imprisoned. If I keep believing... will I be saved?

.....Kudan prison, eh... It looks like falling into ruin seems closer than ever...

Translations by [AsianHobbyist](#) Website **Chapters are split into pages**

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没落予定なので、

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Botsuraku Youtei

Chapter 86 – Side Story – Maria’s winter vacation

It seems that the castle is quite noisy these days. I wonder if they are holding some kind of a festival without me, Maria Kudan?

Even Rahsa or Supatifila who always look out for me are nowhere to be seen.

Hmm? It looks like it is snowing quite a lot today. It has piled up quite a lot.

.....It is about time for the annual traditional event, the snow festival, huh? I will eat all I can from the food carts this year as well. Fufufu, the snow is piling up nicely.

Ah, right. Those kids better not be preparing for the snow festival without me.

If so, I can’t be meekly waiting here.

I should better head out to the courtyard and make a snowman as an initiative as well. The size should be... as big as I can make it.

“Pr-princess?! What are you doing here, at the courtyard?”

Ah... got spotted by a young guard.

“The stuff you see here, it will be our little secret, got it?”

When I say this with a wink, usually most guards don’t say anything. It is an underhanded trick I was taught by another country’s princess. It would be annoying later if she were to tell Rahsa about it, after all. ‘Why are you like this even at this age?!’ he would say with an astonished expression.

Fufufu, it is exactly because I am Maria Kudan that I can always keep on doing this. Do you understand, Rahsa?

The snowball was slowly getting bigger and bigger. Faster and faster.

Ahh, it is already tall enough to reach my chest. And quite heavy too. It was such a cute ball the size of my palm at first.

Alright, this should be enough. It is plenty for the initiative.

I wonder if there is anything else interesting..

Ah, looks like there is a cute girl over at the edge of the courtyard. I guess I will try talking to her. She might want to make a snowman with me.

“You there! What are you doing?”

“Eh-eeek! Sorry! I am not doing anything wrong!”

She started apologizing for some reason. It’s not like I am angry or anything...
Maybe she got surprised because I called out loudly.

“So, what are you doing?”

“Umm, I was on break from work so I thought of taking a walk in the courtyard but this...”

In that cute girl’s arms was a cute, small bird.

So-so cute.... Especially its big eyes.

“....What do you plan on doing? Follow nature’s law and eat it, perhaps?”

“I won’t eat it! Ehh?! I didn’t even think of doing something of the kind!”

“Right. I wouldn’t recommend eating it. It doesn’t look like it has much meat either.”

“Is that the problem?!”

“That is the problem. Even if it’s cute, it would have been bad if it was well-fleshed. What is your name, by the way?

You’re cute so I shall remember it.”

“.....I-I am not well-fleshed, you know...?”

Translations by [AsianHobbyist](#) Website **Chapters are split into pages**

“I’m not going to eat you!”

“Oh. My name is Iris. I am working at the castle just for this winter.”

“Iris, eh? I will remember it. I am Maria Ku-..... Just Maria!”

“Maria-san, right? I will remember it as well. Are you a noble working at the castle?”

Yep, it would be bothersome if she were to know my identity. I just want someone to play with after all.

“I am in charge of cleaning duties!”

“With such a gorgeous dress?! You are lying, aren’t you?!”

“....Exclusive royalty cloth cleaning duties!”

“Ah, there’s a job like that as well, huh? I didn’t know. I am just like a helper doing miscellaneous things. I had to go around quite a few places in the castle for work so you might have seen me.”

“Right. Well, leaving that aside, what shall we do to play?”

“We are not playing! My break will be ending pretty soon too! I need to return to work.”

“Ehhhh”

“Don’t give me the ‘ehhh’. Is it okay for you to not return to your job as well, Maria-san?”

“It’s cold today so it’s fine.”

“Is it really, though!?”



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She is quite the serious girl. Just like Rahsa. She is cute but she has common sense and won't play with me.

“If you’re returning, what will you do about that chick?”

“Ummm, I think its nest is on top of this tree but, it is a bit too high.... I might damage these borrowed clothes if I try climbing the tree so I was thinking I would come back after I change.”

“There is no need for that. I will climb.”

“Wearing that dress?! No, no, no, then I will climb!”

“It’s fine. I am a genius who can climb trees without damaging my dress.”

“Is there even a talent like that?! But still, if you end up damaging it by chance....”

“It will be fine if I just clean it!”

“Is the exclusive royalty cloth cleaning that amazing?!”

Fufufu, there’s no one superior to me when it comes to tree climbing.

Look, look at these smooth tree climbing moves. Such speed that you’d think I wasn’t affected by gravity.

Seee? And before you know it, I am at the top.

“Maria-san! Is there a nest there?”

“Yes, there is one! There are other small chicks in it as well. There is one with good flesh, you wanna eat it?”

“No, I don’t! Please be careful coming down.”

Fufufu, there is no need to worry about me, you know?

Look at these smooth moves. As if I was being guided by the tree, these elegant movements.

Seee? And before you know it, I am on the ground.

“Maria-san! The dress!!””

“Ah, the thread has come undone.”

“Awawawa, the dress....”

“I will get scolded, won’t I?”

By the old woman who is always making me wear these. Also, Rahsa too.

“Maria-san, I will accompany you to apologize. I am not sure if it will help, though...”

“It’s fine. There are many other matters I will be scolded about too, either way.”

“Maria-san, what are you doing normally?!”

“Well, various things. What will you be doing after this?”

“Ummm, bed making, and since the snow is piling up, I also need to sweep the entrance way...”

“I shall help too. I am free, after all.”

“You’re free, eh.... It’s fine, it is your hard earned break, after all.”

“Every day is basically kind of a break to me. I have decided to be with you today. We shall have dinner together as well. You shall eat a lot.”

“Are you planning on making me well-fleshed?!”

“Fufufu.....”

I made a new friend. Cute and interesting, a girl named Iris.